

THE PILGRIM

VOL. 9

JANUARY, 1962

NO.1

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

COMPLETE IN HIM

Give me a life that is secure
In Christ, a faith that will endure;
A sure foundation on the Rock
That can withstand life's greatest shock;
By His blood all cleansed within,
With freedom from the rule of sin;
Grace sufficient for each need,
Strength to go where He may lead;
A light to shine upon my way;
Sweet rest in Him through night and day;
The sight to see His guiding hand;
The will to follow His command;
A joy my heart cannot contain;
A song of praise while life remain;
A greater passion for the lost
To tell the world of Calvary's cost;
A constant hunger for the Word;
A sweet communion with my Lord;
Calvary love that cannot fail:
When Satan doth my soul assail;
A peace that permeates the soul
Because He doth my life control.
Each day with Christ, the world to meet—
Give me a life in Him complete.

Selected.

THE PILGRIM is a religious magazine published monthly by Daniel F. Wolf in the interests of the members of The Old Brethren Church. Subscription rate: \$1.50 per year. Sample copies sent free on request. Address: THE PILGRIM, Rt. 3, Box 1378, Modesto, Calif.

THINGS NEW AND OLD

Before these lines are read, we will have passed into a new year, 1962 A D, which means nineteen hundred and sixty two years since the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How significant that our time is counted from the birth of our Lord! It was the beginning of a new era, and a new creation—the nations of them that are saved, of whom Jesus Christ is called the "Firstborn."

The Old and the New have an inseparable relationship, and it is important that we understand their proper values and place in our lives. It is the New that makes the past old. There are certain old things which we are to seek and cling to, and many others which have served their purpose and passed away, only to become history and a memory. It is said that "A nation with no regard for its past will have little future worth remembering." Perhaps this could also be truthfully said of individuals—and churches too—especially those who have a good heritage.

When Israel of Old went after strange gods and ways which the Lord had not ordained, then the Lord sent the prophet Jeremiah to say to them, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." Jer. 6: 16. But he also told the same prophet to say, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." Jer. 31: 31.

The Apostle cites this prophecy in Hebrews 8: 6-13 and says that Jesus Christ is the Mediator of this New covenant and that it is a "better covenant which is established upon better promises." There can be no doubt of which "old covenant" is meant, for he says it is the one which He made with Israel when He took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. The New covenant is better than the old, because under it sins

are "remembered no more" (forgiven), and the laws of God are "written in the heart" instead of tables of stone. (compare II Cor. 3: 3.

When the Old covenant was given from Sinai, the mountain burned with fire and tempest, and the people dared not touch the mountain, but Moses and Aaron and seventy elders of Israel were commanded to go up into the mountain, and it is said that "they saw the God of Israel: and under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness. And upon the nobles of Israel he laid not his hand: Also they saw God and did eat and drink." Thus, there was some kind of a feast when the old covenant with its commandments was given. So, also, Jesus made a supper (feast) with his disciples when he confirmed the New covenant with them by giving them the CUP which was the token of his own blood which was ready to be shed for the remission of sins: for he said, "This is my blood of the New testament (covenant) which is shed for many for the remission of sins." And at the same time he gave them the NEW COMMANDMENT, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." John 13: 34. Thus fulfilling the promise of Jer. 31: 31. For the essence of the New covenant is the forgiveness of sins, and the laws of God in the heart. In Hebrews 10 we are told that the Holy Ghost is witness that this has become a reality through Christ's offering of himself as the only and lasting sacrifice for sins (verses 14-18), and that this is the NEW AND LIVING WAY (verses 19-22). Therefore all who claim the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost (laws of God in the heart), should know that they are under this new covenant, and are thereby become New creatures; children of God and the seed of Abraham. Gal. 3: 27-29. For it was in Abraham that this covenant was established 430 years before the old covenant was made with Israel at mount Sinai. Gal. 3: 17. It was new only to Israel, because they had the other first, but, it was not new in God's plan of redemption.

Within this context there are many New things which the Lord has given to us, and promised still for the

(Continued on page 12)

JESUS LIVED AND DIED, THAT WE MIGHT DIE AND LIVE.

By D. A. Skiles

Life and death are two outstanding facts in God's great plan of creation in both time, and eternal existence. A prerequisite of every seed is, that it must die to produce life. It is by man that death had its beginning, for we read, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Death can only spring from earth and mortality. Life can only spring from God. It is manifest that there are different forms of death, for man can be dead in sin, and also dead to sin. To be dead in sin is to be separate and out of communication and fellowship with God, not having received the means and provisions which Christ has instituted by which man can become alive in Christ. It is of these that it is written in John 5:25. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Here is a resurrection from being dead in sin to a living life in Christ, a living relationship in communication and fellowship with him of whom it is said, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men," separate from the dead, weak and beggarly elements of the world.

Death separates. Those who are alive in Christ, can also in a sense be dead, for in Eph. 3:3 we read, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Yes there are different forms of death, and dying. Christ came to live and die that we might die to sin, and alienation from God, and be resurrected to a newness of life, as we read in Heb. 10:19, 20.

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say his flesh."

There is nothing more evident than the fact that all mortal beings must die the corporeal death. Separation of soul and body. This can be a most glorious, as well as a most dreadful death. The sting of death is sin, so a sinless death is a transport to victory, to triumph and away from the limitations, tribulations, and sufferings of even a life in Christ on earth. It must be this death that Solomon had in mind when he wrote Ecc. 7:1. "A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death, than the day of ones birth." Here is the life that Jesus made possible by living on earth and dying, that we might die and live. A life so transcending above all other forms of life, even as the heavens are higher than the earth, to reign with Christ, the full fruitage of what we pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." A warless and untroubled world, and on into the eternal relm, the holy city in the new earth, having escaped the fearful and dreadful second death.

A life in heaven, O what is this.
The sum of all that faith believed
Fullness of joy, and depth of bliss
Unseen, unfathomed, unconceived.

—Rossville, Indiana.

THE CHURCH VERSUS THE INDIVIDUAL

This is not an imaginary conflict. It comes to the surface and causes problems at many points. For some it is a question of church authority over against the liberty of the individual conscience. There are those who honestly feel that the Holy Spirit can make His will known more fully through the yielded individual than through an imperfect church. The supposed administrative efficiency of the small and independent operation as opposed to what is believed to be the inertia of the large organization leads others to launch outreach programs of their own. Just the difficulty of getting on with others and adjusting our own ideas

and plans to decisions of the larger group tempts us sometimes to go it alone. These are real problems for the individual Christian and for the church organization as well.

THE CHURCH IS CENTRAL

THE HOLY SPIRIT SPEAKS THROUGH THE CHURCH. This is a proposition that lies close to the heart of the problem. The center of attention in the New Testament is not the individual but the "body of believers"—the "church." In the Old Testament even more so it was always "God's Chosen People." Only rarely does the spotlight focus on individual and personal responsibility. God indeed worked through individual persons, but the concern is always the welfare of the "people of God."

In the New Testament we find a constant emphasis on the KOINONIA, or fellowship. A corporate life, a corporate worship, a corporate witness—these are the usual concerns. No one will deny that the messages of the Epistles are in nearly every instance, if indeed there are any exceptions, to CHURCHES, and not to individuals.

We may say that a church is after all simply the sum-total of its individual members. This is largely true, but it does not give proper recognition to another important fact, viz., that in the case of the New Testament church THE TOTAL IS GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ALL ITS PARTS. Somehow when there is a coming together of a body of true believers we have more than an association of individuals. Someone has defined the church as "an extraordinary association of ordinary individuals." Under the empowering of the Holy Spirit of God this is a case where two plus two equals not four but perhaps twenty-two. Such appears to be the exalted status given the KOINONIA, the church fellowship, the body of Christ in the New Testament.

RUGGED INDIVIDUALISM

In our western culture this is the era of rugged individualism. Unconsciously this mind-set has carr-

ied over into our concepts of church life and it has brought us into a spiritual climate different from that prevailing in the New Testament or even in the sixteenth century. In evangelistic circles we hear much about "soul winning." Often we hear that this is the sum total of the Christian's duty. Although the New Testament writers refer very frequently to salvation and although the word "soul" is used sometimes to refer to a person, the connotation is far removed from that of a modern shallow evangelism that is interested in little more than "saving souls." Even the familiar Old Testament expression, "He that winneth souls is wise," (Prov. 11:30), follows the words, "The fruit of righteousness (or, of the righteous) is a tree of life!"

THE COMMUNITY OF THE REDEEMED

Having said this, let me hasten to correct any possible false impressions. Individual salvation is indeed important. The new man in Christ Jesus must first of all be BORN AGAIN, even as a physical life begins with birth. But I am trying to emphasize the fact that birth, however crucially essential, is after all only the merest beginning of the total task. Billy Graham, the well-known mass evangelist, has declared that when a soul accepts Christ in a public meeting only about five per cent of the work of making him a full-orbed, mature Christian is done. The New Testament itself illustrates this point. Although the Book of Acts deals mainly with so-called "soul saving," certainly all the epistolary literature is concerned with the nurture of the believers into living churches.

It has been well stated that although it is not impossible for someone to be a Christian alone, it is difficult. We need each other desperately. "How they love one another!" is what the Roman soldiers used to say as they watched the Christian group under persecution and in the face of death. The exceeding great and precious promises of the New Testament are to be individually appropriated, but in a real sense they often, by the very nature of the case, can only become meaningful and vital as they are sought and app-

ropriated in a living fellowship. Paul prayed (Eph. 3:17, 18), "that ye . . . may be able to comprehend WITH ALL SAINTS." Christ can be truly known only in corporate worship and fellowship.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Something of the foregoing concept is included in what may be called "The New Testament Doctrine of the Church." The cross of Jesus is central indeed, and it is right to say that salvation doctrine is the most important. But if one conceives of these teachings without reference to the emerging community of the redeemed as the normal and full outworking of the so-called salvation doctrine, then he has only a partial gospel. No understanding of the New Testament is adequate without a clear concept of the doctrine of the church. The salvation of the individual soul is sadly incomplete until he finds himself vitally integrated and caught up into both the invisible and the visible church.

But we still have those who say the individual is free to act, and is also free to be led of the Spirit. It is usually not wise to try to discourage anyone who is honestly trying to follow the Spirit's leading, but one is constrained to ask a few questions. Do we not see in the New Testament the Spirit of God at work in and through His church? Do we have New Testament instances of individuals who ignored the rest of the church in order to follow the Spirit's leading? Is it not also reasonable as well as Scriptural that, "in the multitude of counselors there is safety"? It would seem that the Spirit of God could work through a group of yielded persons in a vital fellowship more safely and surely than through a single individual without the benefit of a check with others of his brethren. Is it not quite presumptuous for any member of the church to say, "I am led of the Spirit, but I do not believe my brethren are capable of such leading"? Let us remember that the Spirit of God does speak and lead through His church.

It is a good spiritual discipline to subject our

own ideas and plans to the check and scrutiny of the brotherhood. For anyone to say that he is clear in how the Spirit is leading him, and therefore it is unnecessary, if not actually wrong, to submit it to the judgment of the larger group, can very easily become a trap of Satan. The Bible warns us that there are other spirits speaking besides the Holy Spirit, and that therefore we must try the spirits. I John 4:1. Let us make sure that our certainty is not cocksureness and that we show proper humility and a genuine spirit of teachableness. The danger of carnality and self-will in such situations is very real and the individual who is claiming a leading that diverges from that of his brethren should see that he gives double proof of his spiritual integrity.

A Spirit-led church is not opposed to the individual. Such a church does not quench initiative, and the individual's guidance by the Holy Spirit and the guidance given through the church will not be found to be in conflict. Rightly understood the church is not an external authority to regulate the individual's life, but is a living fellowship to which the Spirit-led member bears a vital relationship. It is "with all saints" that the member comes to know and understand Christ's will for himself and for his church. How happy and fruitful is the situation when these two do not conflict and when they are found to be complementing and giving assurance to each other!

—Adapted from Gospel Herald, 1955.

THE LORD GOES BEFORE

The Lord goes before thee,
So make no delay
To follow His leading;
He knoweth the way.
The way, He has promised,
Shall not easy be;
But grace all sufficient
He giveth to thee.

—Selected

THE HOUR OF DECISION

The king of Babylon made an image of gold, then issued the decree that all must worship it. Death in a fiery furnace was the penalty for refusal. Three Hebrew captives, faithful to Jehovah, faced the hour of decision. On the one side was the king of a world empire, a royal decree, idolatry, and a fiery furnace. On the opposite side—Jehovah. Would they follow the majority in idol worship, or would they remain faithful to Jehovah?

It is easy to contend for the faith in fair weather but a more serious matter in a violent storm of opposition with death the penalty for refusal to conform. These young men stood firm in their hour of decision. When they refused to worship the image, their case was cited to the king. They had to make a public declaration of which side they were on, there being no opportunity to compromise.

They chose to follow Jehovah, leaving the result in His hands. He could save them, but if not, they would still be faithful. In a dark hour when even greater darkness might prevail, they said the equivalent to "Not my will, but thine, be done."

Their lives were hidden in Jehovah, beyond the king's power. Their object of worship was greater than an image made by men. Jehovah had the power to save them from the fiery furnace, but if it was His will for them to die there, they still would be faithful. They did their duty, leaving the issue in Jehovah's hands.

These young men knew Jehovah in their homeland before being carried into captivity. In their new surroundings in a foreign land Jehovah remained real to them. They refused to be influenced by the fact that the great majority were on the opposite side. Instead of looking around at the mass of people, they looked up to Jehovah. They defied the king.

The king in his fury cast them into the fiery furnace, for there was no place for rebels in his king-

dom. But when he looked into the furnace, he saw four persons there. Jehovah had intervened and overruled the king. All the fire did to those young men was to consume the cords which bound them.

If some of our young people are undergoing persecution or ridicule because of their faith in Jesus Christ they could gain inspiration by the example of these Hebrew lads.

Consider the case of Mark H—, who left home to attend college. He entered a different environment, faced new temptations. The majority influence of the classroom and campus demanded he desist from the Christian testimony he voiced at home. The majority of his schoolmates worshiped other gods. Should he keep quiet so as to avoid undue notice and ridicule? That was the temptation that faced Mark. If he softened his belief in Jesus, he might be lost in the large crowd. No one would know what he believed.

Mark did not keep still. He had a living trust in Jesus Christ that kept him from following the majority. Regardless of what the consequences might be, he voiced his belief in Jesus Christ. He refused to dodge; he would not compromise. He fought an unhealthy environment; he challenged the powers of unbelief; he remained true to Jesus Christ.

Robert, also, went to college. Instead of being grounded in the faith like Mark, his religion was based on external supports. When these artificial supports were removed, Robert wavered in his allegiance. He did not have that internal reality, that determination he would not worship any idol or god except Jesus Christ. Jesus was not all in all to him.

Robert came to the fork in the road where he must choose whom he would serve. He was placed in a position where he must assert his belief. He compromised, and in doing so became the loser. When the spies came back from the promised land, the majority of them had lost their faith. The people followed the majority, and consequently wandered for years in the desert.

If we are risen with Christ, we seek those things which are above. We set our affections on things

above, not on earthly things. The Hebrew youths saw the image, the king, the throngs, the fiery furnace; above all they saw God.

Mark saw the college youths, felt the unfavorable environment, encountered the wave of unbelief; above all this he saw Jesus Christ. Rather than look around him he looked up.

As a result of their magnificent faith, the Hebrew captives brought others to the worship of Jehovah. By his walk of faith in college, Mark strengthened the lives of other Christian students.

If we would win others to Jesus, they must see our faith when Satan casts temptations about us. If we dodge or evade the issue, we loose. Our faith must be fireproof.

—Selected

NEW AND OLD (Continued from page 3)

future. While his people were still under the Old covenant, he promised that he would make "new heavens and a new earth." Isa. 65: 17; 66: 22. That his people would be called by a new name. Isa. 62: 2; 65: 15. Promised to put a new spirit into his people. Ezek. 11: 19; 36: 26.

Under the New covenant, the Apostle Paul says, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." II Cor. 5: 17. A new way of worship (Heb 10: 19-22; Jno. 4: 23); new graces and personality. Eph. 4: 24; Col. 3: 10. And when the earthly pilgrimage is done and the crown is won, in heaven, around the throne, the redeemed will sing a triumphant victorious NEW SONG. Rev. 5: 9.

"Therefore, every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

D.F.W.

SOME THOUGHTS AGAINST SELFISHNESS

Do we get joy from ourselves, or from others?

If those about us is our source of joy, then we must give out to others to make them happy, or we would not be taking our part in the great scheme of happiness.

It has been said that the greatest desire of every one is to be appreciated, that is, to feel that we are wanted and needed. How it does please the soul to be sincerely admired and loved. If then we crave the esteem and love of others, we must conduct ourselves in a way to cause them to love us; we must be lovely.

When we know we have done a good deed for the welfare of others, it makes us happy to know that they recognize and appreciate it. If this is true with us, we can make others happy by showing our appreciation for their benefits to us.

Is there any one who is wholly satisfied with self? To answer this question truthfully, we have only to contemplate living completely alone, with no communication whatever with any one else. If self is the source of happiness, then we could be happiest when alone. —From the Editor's note book.

ARE YOU LOOSING A BOY?

He is not kidnapped by bandits and hidden in a cave to weep and starve and raise a nation to frenzied searching. Were that the case, one hundred thousand men would rise to the rescue if need be. Unfortunately, the losing of the lad is without any dramatic excitement, though very sad and very real.

The fact is, his father lost him. Being too busy to sit with him at the fireside and answer his trivial questions during the years when fathers are the only great heroes of the boys, he let go his hold upon him.

Yes, his mother lost him. Being much engrossed in her teas, dinners, and club programs, she left the maid to hear the boy say his prayers, and thus her

grip slipped and the boy was lost to his home.

The church lost him. Being so much occupied with sermons for the wise and elderly, and having good care for dignity, the ministers and elders were unmindful of the feeling of the boy in the pew and made no provision in sermon or song for his boyishness, and so the church and many sad hearted parents are looking for the lost boy. — Selected.

CORRECTION

In A LETTER TO READERS OF THE PILGRIM, by Brother Edward Royer, in the Dec., 1961 number, the next to the last line should read, "Denmark Brethren" instead of "Dunkard Brethren."

When the evening shades are falling
As the end of life draws near,
May we hear the angels calling
With their voices sweet and clear.

May the road that we are traveling
While the sun is shining bright,
Lead us to the happy ending
Where no evening fades to night.

When life's evening shades are gathering,
And the sun is sinking low,
May we hear the Saviour calling
When we leave our homes below.

When we hear Him gently calling
Be it morning noon or night,
It will seem like twilight falling
At the dawn of heavenly light.

When we share our Saviour's glory
Over on the other shore,
We will sing redemption's story
With our loved ones gone before.

—Selected

Historical

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT

During the early part of Diocletian's persecution Constantius Chlorus ruled, with as much humanity as circumstances permitted him to exercise, the provinces of the West. On his death, at York, in the year 306, the army proclaimed Constantine, his son, Emperor. In the meantime, the provinces eastward of Gaul, (France) were distracted by the dissensions of rival emperors which favored the growing strength of Constantine. In 311, Galerius, the fiercest among the assailants of Christianity, died, and his dominions were divided between Maximin and Licinius; Maxentius had already usurped the government of Italy and Africa. Presently Constantine, justified, as most assert, by sufficient provocation, marched into Italy and overthrew Maxentius in the immediate neighborhood of Rome; that tyrant (as all admit him to have been) was drowned in the Tiber, and his dominions were added to the possessions of the conqueror. This event took place in the year 312; and it has been usually assigned as marking the period of Constantine's conversion to Christianity. A miraculous story is connected with this epoch in our history. As the Emperor was marching toward Rome, at the head of his army, he beheld a luminous Cross, suspended about noonday in the air, and inscribed with the following words—*Toutw vixa*—'By this conquer.' The phenomenon confirmed his uncertain faith, and afforded him the surest omen of victory. But this was not all: during the ensuing night the form of Christ himself presented itself with the same Cross, and directed him to frame a standard after that shape. And it is certain that, about that period, and possibly on that occasion, a standard was so framed, and continued for many following years to be displayed, when ever it became necessary to excite the enthusiasm of the Christian soldiers—but the extraordinary appearances

to which its adoption is ascribed demand the most rigid examination.

In the first place, the story which we have shortly given is related by no contemporary author, excepting Eusebius; next, it is related in his Life of Constantine, and not in his Ecclesiastical History; it is related in the year 338, or six-and-twenty years after the supposed appearance; it is related on the authority of Constantine alone, though it must have been witnessed by his whole army, and notorious throughout his whole empire; and lastly it was published after the death of Constantine. In an age, wherein pious frauds had already acquired some honor; by a writer, who, respectable as he undoubtedly is, and faithful in most of his historical records, does not even profess those rigid rules of veracity which command universal credit; in a book, which rather wears the character of partial panegyric, than of exact and scrupulous history—a flattering fable might be published and believed; but it can claim no place among the authentic records of history, and by writers, whose only object is truth, it may very safely be consigned to contempt and oblivion.

The defeat of Maxentius was followed by a conference between Constantine and Licinius, which led to the publication, in March of 313, of the celebrated Edict of Milan.

EDICT OF MILAN. This Edict was a proclamation of universal toleration; but its advantages were of course chiefly or entirely reaped by the Christians, as theirs had been the only religion not already tolerated. It gave back to them the civil and religious rights of which they had been deprived; it restored without dispute, delay or expense, the places of worship which had been demolished, and the lands which had been confiscated—and free and absolute power was granted to the Christians, and to all others, of following the religion which every individual might think proper to follow.

Immediately afterwards, Licinius, who was no friend of Christianity, overthrew the eastern Emperor Maximin,

who had been its savage adversary, and became master of the empire of the east. A war followed between the conqueror and Constantine, which terminated, in 315, to the advantage of the latter, who on that occasion extended his empire to the eastern limits of Europe; eight years of peace succeeded, which were employed by the Christian Emperor in securing the real interests and legislating for the happiness of his subjects. This period of rare tranquillity was succeeded by a second war with Licinius, which terminated in 324 by his submission and death, and by the consequent union of the whole empire under the sceptre of Constantine.

The year which followed the final success of Constantine was disgraced by the execution of his eldest son; and it is not disputed, that the progress of his career was marked by the usual excesses of intemperate and worldly ambition. Some of his laws were severe even to cruelty, and the general propriety of his moral conduct cannot with any justice be maintained. Hence a suspicion has arisen as to the sincerity of his conversion—chiefly, as it appears to us, or entirely founded on the inadequacy of his character to his profession. But is there any page in Christian history, or any form of Christian society, which does not mournfully attest the possibility of combining the most immoral conduct with the most unhesitating faith? Or is this a condition of humanity, from which monarchs are more exempt than their subjects? We should recollect, moreover, that the character of Constantine, notwithstanding its grievous stains, will bear a comparison with some of the best among his pagan predecessors; while it was free from those monstrous deformities which distinguished not a few of them, and which have indeed been rarely paralleled in Christian history. But even had his conduct been more reprehensible, than in truth it was, it would have furnished very insufficient evidence against the sincerity of his belief. Again, it was usual in those days, in continuance of a practice of which we have mentioned the cause and origin, to defer the sacrament of Baptism until the approach of death, and then once

to administer it, as the means of regeneration and the assurance of pardon and grace. In compliance with this custom the emperor was not baptized (he did not even become a Catechumen) until his last illness; but no argument can hence be drawn against his sincerity, which would not equally apply to a large proportion of the Christians in his empire. In his favor the following facts should be observed. For many years he had publicly and consistently professed his belief in Christianity: in a long discourse, which is still extant he even expatiated on its various proofs; he began his reign by protecting the believers; in its progress he favored and honored them; he inscribed the cross on the banners of the empire; he celebrated the festivals of the Church; he associated in the closest intimacy with Christian writers and prelates; he inquired into all the particulars of their faith, and displayed what some have thought an inconsiderate zeal for its purity. By such reasons, according to every fair principle of historical inference, we are precluded from any reasonable doubt on this subject; nor need we hesitate for a moment to acquit a wise and, in many respects, a virtuous Prince of the odious charge of the foulest description of hypocrisy.

At the same time, we are willing to admit that his conduct to the Christians was strictly in accordance with his interests; and it is very probable, that the protection with which he distinguished them may IN THE FIRST INSTANCE have originated in his policy. But this is perfectly consistent with his subsequent conversion. And we may here remark, that those who assign policy as his chief or only motive, bear the strongest evidence to the power and real importance which the Church of Christ had acquired before his time; they attest, that its stability had not been shaken by the sword of Diocletian; that by its own unassisted and increasing energy it had triumphed over the fury of the most determined of its persecutors, and that its claims on the justice and respect of the Throne, though only urged by perseverance in suffering, could no longer be overlooked with safety. And this fact is

of much greater historical importance, than the motives or sincerity of any individual can possibly be.

Let us now proceed to ascertain what was the condition and constitution of the Church, as Constantine found it; what were the principal alterations introduced by him, and what form and attitude he left it.

—Waddington's History of the Church.

HANNAH

(Continued from page 20)

time he would be a little older, a little more grown. And yet for her great love and thankfulness to God, she could burst forth with a wonderful song of praise to Him who had brought joy into her life.

How tenderly and lovingly must have cared for little Samuel! And how carefully she must have taught him in the ways of the Lord! For the very first thing that we read of him doing when he arrived at the house of the Lord is, "And he worshipped the Lord there." The worship of a little child! What a tribute to this holy mother! She did not say, "I won't try to influence him in these things, but, when he's older, he can make up his own mind." If this had been her attitude, the wonderful account of the great prophet Samuel, would never have been written.

Even here Hannah did not consider her duty done, for though the Lord blessed her with five more children, she still came from year to year to bring the little clothes which she made for Samuel.

What love! What devotion to God! What an example for Christian parents is shown by the holy woman, Hannah.

Daniel S. Wagner
Modesto, California

CHARACTERS OF THE BIBLE

HANNAH

THE MOTHER OF SAMUEL

The short account which we have of this godly woman is certainly heart touching. Year by year she faithfully went with her husband to worship and sacrifice to the Lord in Shiloh. But one thing was lacking in her life. Her husband, Elkanah, had another wife, Penninah, who was blessed with children, but Hannah was childless.

How her heart yearned for a child of her own! And besides, as if this were not enough, Peninah, who could have been of comfort to Hannah, tormented her on this account until the poor woman was distraught with grief and humiliation. It was in this state that she came in her sorrow and poured out her soul unto God, vowing that if He would grant her a child, he would be given to the Lord "all the days of his life."

What an example of love and devotion to God! She did not pray just for a child for herself, but for one to be given to the service of the Lord. According to the law, he, being a Levite, (compare I Samuel 1:1 and I Chronicles 6:34,33,27, and 28,) was to serve from age twenty five to fifty. But this was not enough. She would give him for "all the days of his life."

We well know the story. The Lord is ever mindful of the prayers of His people, and He did not forget Hannah. She received her dearest desire, and, for a time, she was blessed with the presence of a little boy, Samuel.

But neither did Hannah forget her promise to the Lord, and, while Samuel was just a little boy, she took him up to Shiloh to give him to the Lord. As she went on the way, she must have been filled with deep emotion. While she rejoiced to be of this service to God, she must have also felt very sorrowful. She would very seldom see her little boy now. Each

(Continued on inside of page)

THE PILGRIM

VOL. 9

FEBRUARY—MARCH, 1962

NOS. 2-3

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

SPEED THE MESSAGE

Speed the message of salvation
To the earth's remotest bound
Pardon for the vilest sinner
In Christ Jesus can be found.

Love has wondrously provided
Alien man to reconcile
For in Jesus is forgiveness
And the Father's welcoming smile.

Sin has worked its deadly evil
God is not in all man's thought
As he lives without the Saviour
By whose blood he has been bought.

But the gospel can transform him,
Silence all his guilty fears
As he sees the face of Jesus
And repents in bitter tears.

Jesus is the one great answer
To the deepest need of man
Let us hasten to proclaim Him
AS and WHEN and WHERE you can.

—Selected.

THE PILGRIM is a religious magazine published monthly by Daniel F. Wolf in the interests of the members of The Old Brethren Church. Subscription rate: \$1.50 per year. Sample copies sent free on request. Address: THE PILGRIM, Rt. 3, Box 1378, Modesto, Calif.

THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION

All that may be known of the doctrine of Predestination, is what can be learned from the Bible. It is a New Testament doctrine which has commanded the interest and study of many persons, both in and out of the church. There are some who feel that we are incapable of adequately understanding its implications, and others who apparently undertake to explain more than what is revealed about it.

I have not examined the dictionary definition of the word Predestination, but a simple analysis of it would seem to indicate something pre-determined or purposely planned and designed in the mind of the Creator before it is done; as against the idea of a work or action persued without a purpose or determined goal.

By taking the word separately, apart from its Biblical context, some have supposed it to mean that we have no choice or exercise of our wills that could in any way determine our destiny; that the course in life, and destiny of every man has been predetermined and fixed, for either good or evil, by the Creator before we were born, and that we are without choice or power to do otherwise. And the logical deduction can be made from this idea, that what we have done in the past, what we are doing now, and what we will do in the future, must be exactly what was so pre-determined that we would do. And therefore the sinner who disobeys God's revealed will, is doing so by necessity because he cannot do otherwise, and is not really to be blamed for being a sinner.

Now, as already stated, this is what is supposed by some to be the Biblical doctrine of "Predestination." But a careful reading of the New Testament texts containing this word neither states nor indicates such a doctrine. And if we desire an intelligent understanding, and wish to receive a blessing and comfort from

the Scriptures that teach the doctrine of Predestination, we will need to observe carefully what they do say, and not hold to some predetermined idea of what we think they mean.

The two principle New Testament texts where the word Predestination is used are the following:

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Romans 8: 29, 30.

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. Eph. 1: 4, 5.

In neither of these texts is there any hint of any predetermination to bring into being any person or creature to be damned or lost. But quite the contrary, it asserts that God had a predetermined purpose in creating man, and a glorious eternal goal for him, which was to be conformed to the image of his Son; and ultimately to be glorified with him. And this being God's predetermined purpose in creating man, he provided and exercised the succeeding enabling steps to accomplish it.

We should be reminded that both of these texts are contained in a lengthy epistle to the Romans and a lesser one to the Ephesians; both of which contain many other verses, all by the same writer, in which are revelations, exhortations and warnings toward faith in God, making right choices, and sanctified living according to the will of God. Indeed, in the opening chapter of Romans, Paul asserts that the gospel which he is called to preach was promised "afore by the prophets in the holy Scriptures (Old Testament)." That he is a "debtor" (obligated) to preach it to all: Greeks, Barbarians, wise and unwise, and that it is the

power of God unto salvation to ALL THAT BELIEVE. Here, then, is the gracious calling (chap. 8:30) to bring men into the knowledge of, and relationship to, the enabling means to accomplish in them the purpose for which they were created. And in the second chapter he says that God will render to every man according to his deeds: "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile. But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; For there is no respect of persons with God." Romans 2: 6-11.

Now it is obvious that what the Apostle writes in the 8th chapter of Romans would not contradict or cancel out what he wrote in chapters one and two. Nor what he wrote in the first chapter of Ephesians, would cancel out other revelations and warnings in the rest of the book of Ephesians; or in any other of his epistles. Therefore we must interpret our texts on predestination in Romans 8 and Ephesians one in harmony and the light of all the rest of Romans and Ephesians, and the epistles to other churches. And especially do we need to guard against interpreting them to mean something we think they might mean, more than what they actually say. Therefore let us analyze again what they do actually say:

In Romans 8: 28-30 we are told that God "foreknew" that he would have a people who would love him, and because of that foreknowledge he called them (through the gospel, chap.1) according to the purpose for which he created them, which was to be conformed to the image of his Son, to be justified (have their sins forgiven), and ultimately to be glorified.

The subjects in this text, are those "who love God." And harmonizing it with chapter one, causes us to understand that they may be of the Greeks, or Barbarians, wise or unwise; so that there is no partiality

or exclusion. And chapter 2: 7-11 shows us plainly that this calling and bringing to maturity is predicated upon the exercise of the free will and choice of the individuals who are subjects of this amazing work.

Again in Ephesians 1: 3-6 is a revelation of the gracious disposition of God the Father toward "us", even before the world was, to adopt us as children to himself, through the agency and person of his Son Jesus Christ. And that we should be holy and without blame (justified) before him in love. And all of this to the "praise of the glory of his grace" which makes us acceptable in the "beloved" (family).

As in Romans 8, the subjects in Ephesians one are saved and beloved children of God. The lost or reprobate are not under consideration in these texts, but it is a tremendous encouragement and incentive and assurance, to the saved, of the predetermined purpose of their creation, of their high calling, of the matchless love and influence, and the mighty power and ability of our Creator to accomplish in his children that which he intended and purposed before the world was; which most probably was the motivating reason for the creation.

It tells us whose the program is, where it originated, the motives on which it rests, the purpose for which we were created, what the conditions are and the mighty power and enabling means to accomplish it.

But we might still be wondering, What about the lost souls who are not included in this salvation? They are not under consideration in these texts. But there are many other places in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the epistles of the beloved apostles Paul, Peter, James and John and Jude, which tell of the awful tragedies of the lost; which graciously and ceaselessly warn sinners to flee the wrath to come.

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. --D.F.W.

THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF NON-CONFORMITY

In Two Parts

PART I

The child of God is to be separate from this world system. "Love not the world; neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever", I John 2:15-17.

The Bible teaches separation from the world, separation from that whole political, commercial, and ecclesiastical system that is trying to make itself happy without God. The average person works for this life only: he prepares for this life only: he lives for this life only. The aims and ambitions of the average unsaved person center around the brief time he spends in this life. His desire is to acquire some property, to make a name for himself, and to satisfy his physical appetites. A scientist, when asked the question "Do you believe in a future life beyond the grave?", said, "To tell the truth, I've been so occupied with making myself happy in this life that I have not even had time to think about a future life." That is the philosophy of this world-system from which the child of God is to separate. The Scriptures are clear on this teaching. You don't need a college degree to understand them. The whole tenor of the Bible, from beginning to end, indicates that the people of God are to be separate from the pride and vanity and extravagance of this world-system. And we are not only to be separated from the world, but dedicated and consecrated and devoted to the service of God.

We want to consider the Bible background for this subject, and then we will discuss some of the more practical details. In addition to I John 2:15-17

(quoted above), the Word of the Lord says: Leviticus 20:24, "I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people." Romans 12:1-2, "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

To "conform" means "to be in harmony with" or "to pattern after" or "do not be in harmony with" this world-system. II Corinthians 6:17 "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you." James 4:4 "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Now that is pretty plain language, is it not? Those are God's words! Talk about a worldly Christian—there is no such thing. A person might be worldly, but then he's not Christian. You may as well talk about a heavenly devil as to talk about a worldly Christian! Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

II Timothy 3:1-5 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves. . . having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." Paul could have advised Timothy to be a good mixer and to teach his hearers to play ball with the apostates of the day, but instead, he said, "from such turn away." People today seem to have the idea that we must mingle with and become like the world in order to win them and yet when a man falls into a deep pit, no-one ever dreams of jumping down into the well (alongside him) to get him out! Instead, he stays way up at the top, and from there lets down a ladder of rope, and lifts him up.

You believe God's physical laws of separation. When a quart of milk begins to sour, what do you do? Mix it

with a quart of sweet milk so that both will be good? No! You set it aside until it becomes altogether sour. You separate the bad from the good. A man has a sore leg. Gangrene sets in. What do they do? Cut it off! They separate the bad from the good. God has always been a God of separation. He separated light from darkness, good from evil, the sheep from the goats, the wheat from the tares, the wise from the foolish, and He expects the Christian to be separated from this world system.

But you say, "How can I have a good time if I follow this old-fashioned view of separation?" Listen friend, you don't know what a good time really is until you have dedicated your life completely to God. There is a deep satisfaction and joy that comes from knowing your sins are forgiven, and that you are abiding in the perfect will of God. But you say, "Everybody is doing it." By that you mean of course that the majority of people are smoking and dancing and attending the movies, etc.

The most tragic statement in the Bible is found in Matthew 7:13,14. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The Bible says that many (literally, "the majority") will follow the broad road that leads to destruction. The majority of men and women are going to die and spend eternity in Hell fire, and if you follow the crowd, you're going to go there too.

We have seen that the teaching of the Bible concerning the Christian and his relation to the world is that of separation, and now we want to consider some practical applications of this much neglected Bible teaching. Worldliness involves more than dressing like the world and enjoying the entertainment of the world. Strife and worry are worldly attitudes. The worldly, unsaved person worries when difficulties come his way. One who is sensitive and easily offended is worldly in attitude. But in this particular message, we want to dis-

cuss two neglected truths, the Christian and worldly dress, and, the Christian and worldly amusements.

1. THE CHRISTIAN AND WORLDLY DRESS

How should the Christian dress? Is there any prescribed way for the child of God to adorn his body? If we approach the New Testament with the idea that we are going to find in it a set of dress regulations, with the material and the pattern all described, we are bound for disappointment. It is not there. The Bible lays down great principles on this matter of dress, just as it does in many other areas of our Christian life. For example, the Bible does not specifically say that I must stop at a stop sign. Is it wrong not to stop then? And the answer is "Yes, it is wrong not only because I might get caught, but also because there is a principle in the Bible which says that we should obey the higher powers, those who rule over us. And they say we shall stop, and therefore in obedience to this divine principle in the Bible, I stop. And just so the Word of God does not specifically tell what color clothes to wear, or how long the dress should be, or of what particular material our clothing should be made—but the Bible principle is found in God's Word:

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works", I Timothy 2:9,10. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" I Peter 3:3,4. Those are not the words of some fanatical narrow-minded preacher. Those are God's words. And if such are the standards for the Christian woman how much more should they be the standards for the Christian man, who is to be the head of the woman.

According to the principle just established, the Christian should not wear gold for the sake of decorating his body. And yet there is enough gold in our

churches to make countless numbers of golden calves! If all the finger-rings, ear rings, wedding bands, and other pieces of jewelry displayed on the body for worldly pride, were melted together, it would be easy to make numbers of calves like the Israelites made while camped at the foot of Mt. Sinai! But you say, "Can't I keep on wearing jewelry and still be a Christian?" And I would like to give the answer by asking another question: "Can you be a Christian and willfully disobey the Word of God?" Certainly not, and no person who is painted like an Easter egg and decorated like a Christmas tree should ever be brazen enough to call himself Christian!

According to the principle just established from God's Word, dresses that are short, tight-fitting, thin, low-necked, sleeveless, and expensive—are a disgrace for any Christian woman to wear. Low necks, tight dresses, bare arms, painted faces are the order of the day, but God says, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel... not with... gold, or pearls, or costly array." God doesn't expect your clothes to look like the front cover of the latest fashion magazine!

Why must you follow the fashions of the day? Suppose you are peculiar, what of it? It would be a thousand times better to retain your modesty and to please God, than to adopt a manner of dress that borders on the immoral! There must be a dividing line between the Christian and the world. The born-again woman wears modest apparel and long veiled hair. The believing man may be non-conformed in the American society by not wearing the tie (a cloth necklace), by wearing the "plain" coat, or by wearing the beard.

You say, "But no one is going to tell me what kind of clothes to wear." That is a silly statement to make. Every one of us (consciously or unconsciously) dresses according to someone's pattern. You either get your pattern of dress from the Word of God, as understood by godly men and women, or you get it from the world and worldly-minded people. Whatever fashion decrees, no matter how ridiculous or how immodest it is, that's

the goddess that many of you are worshipping, and this world is telling you what to wear! Don't say, "No one is going to tell me what kind of clothes to wear." Someone is telling you, never forget that!

NEXT: The Christian and Worldly Amusements.

CHRISTMAS

By L. I. Moss

While Christmas is past, if God permits, there will be another season they call Christmas. But oh, how little honor is shown our dear Saviour. It has become the greatest time for merchants of the world to make money. The money spent for decorations, not to honor Christ, but to make a worldly display. The Christmas tree is an abomination to God.

The giving of gifts, or exchanging gifts is no honor to Christ. I do not say a Christian can not give a loved one a present in respect to the loved ones, but do it at some other time and not as a Christmas gift. These days too many high priced toys are given to children too.

School children, employees, and others draw names and exchange gifts. Some worldly taught child gets a gift for one of our children so unbecoming a Christian can not approve it, yes and adults do too. Yet parents will let their children keep such gifts and adults will keep gifts they know they should not wear, or even possess, as they are afraid of offending the giver, but never think about offending Christ. Would it not be more honor to Christ to keep ourselves and our children unspotted from these worldly activities? The only honor is bestowed on the giver.

The Christmas programs are a mockery, worldly amusements, entertainments to satisfy the lust of the flesh, no honor to Christ. How terrible the idea of Santa Claus. Yet many professing people teach their children such things. Cards and other Christmas mail have become a great burden to the mail system.

—Bradford, Ohio

TURN WITH CAUTION

Many car accidents happen because a car unexpectedly and suddenly changes direction—from one line of traffic into another, into or out of a side road or lane. And so we are often warned to turn slowly, with caution. Changes of direction are dangerous.

Now changes of direction are sometimes necessary. It is not a bad thing to turn to the left, or to the right, unless such turns are specifically prohibited at certain places. In social and religious matters, most of us are inclined to be intolerant of changes. We like to go straight ahead. Turning involves decision and careful consideration. We feel safer following our noses, looking neither to right or left.

Some of us, on the other hand, become impatient when needed changes come slowly. We see the necessity for a change of direction, but our brothers do not. So we need to reason and beg, to pray and wait. This waiting may be for years, even from one generation to another. Some have not the patience to wait. And so again and again we have those breaks which have plagued our history. Churches are divided, communities are split, or some leave the church to seek their desired changes in another brotherhood.

Let us admit that some changes have come too slowly. And yet much good can come from hesitancy to change. Our church life gains stability from the tendency to continue in the same direction. If to change were as easy as to go straight ahead, we could hardly recognize ourselves from day to day. We would be cut loose from all historical moorings. Our directions would be determined by the winds of the day. Church-wide unity would disappear, for our congregations would be going all directions at once. It is really fearful to contemplate what would happen if there were no resistance to change.

When changes are made slowly there is time to consider them adequately. What are the pro's and con's? What light does history shed on the wisdom of the pro-

posed change? Projected down the years, what will be its effects? Is the proposed change the right one to accomplish the desired end, or does the amendment itself require amendment? And most important of all, time is needed to study carefully the relevant teachings of God's Word. Any move is fatal that is contrary to the divine will. We must be sure we are right before we turn.

Making changes slowly gives us an opportunity to take the whole brotherhood along. And this is very important in any group action. Especially in the Christian Church there should be no enforcement of the will of one against the will of another. Or as little of that as possible. It is a blessed thing when the whole church can move together. That is not often possible when a change is first proposed. But discussion and time for thinking and praying often make it possible to arrive at unanimous action. Even if there are some who are still unconvinced and uncertain, they may, after the vote carries against them, move to make the action unanimous.

Some change, it seems, is necessary. We cannot live in a changing world without adapting in some way to its changes. These adaptations not only make our continued life possible; they may make it better and more effective. Eternal truth is not altered by our changes. It has been abundantly demonstrated that the Gospel lives on and redeems men from sin in a great variety of circumstances. We used to preach the Gospel in our churches with our horses tied in long rows of sheds outside. Now for the most part the sheds are gone, and when we build new churches we plan for adequate parking space for our cars. This change has probably not diminished the force of the Gospel we preach.

We need not fear changes. But we do need to be concerned that the right changes are made, and that they are made wisely. Certainly they should be made cautiously; usually they should be made slowly. They must be made in the perspective of our past and our desired future. In all our changes we must remember that we

are under the eyes of a God who never changes.

—Gospel Herald, 1957.

"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

The dispersion which followed the fiery persecution of the saints at Jerusalem was productive of good. The scattered apostles, and the overseers of the deacons as well, of whom Philip named in the text was one, preached wherever they went, and many believed. The very steps taken by the enemies of the cross to put an end to its power "turned out unto the furtherance of the gospel." In this we can see the overruling hand of Providence.

There is one point in this line of thought which I desire to make specially prominent. This point is the readiness with which believers in that day submitted to the ordinance of baptism, and the consequences which were almost sure to follow. The duty of being immersed seems to have pressed itself upon their hearts, and nothing short of obedience to this command could give their consciences rest. But how is it now! Error has done so much to rob this impressive ordinance of its beauty and significance that many seem indifferent to its claims, or ignore it entirely.

Thousands professing faith in Christ at the present day go away from the revival singing:

"Nothing, either great or small;

Nothing have I now to do:

Jesus died and paid it all,

Long time ago."

This would surely be getting salvation at a cheap rate. There is in this no "trial of faith, more precious than gold," no "cleansing of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." "This means receiving the crown without bearing the cross. But the early Christians were never soothed with such sedatives. On the contrary, they were admonished to

count the cost. Some of the items in this cost were "SELF-DENIAL, NO CERTAIN DWELLING PLACE," THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS, PERSECUTIONS, FIERY TRIALS, BONDS, IMPRISONMENTS, DEATH. They were not taught to regard the church as a cradle in which their spiritual infancy was to be rocked, but as being a camp for soldiers, with stout hearts and strong sinews, ready to do battle for the Lord. They were therefore exhorted to put on the whole armor of God: and their baptismal vow was the act of putting this armor on publicly, and their enrollment in the Lord's host, prepared for the great conflict. They were expected from that hour forth to "fight the good fight of faith," and the battle hymn that flowed out of the heart of every baptized believer of that day was, in spirit if not in form, the same that some of us are still ready to sing:

"Sure I must fight, if I would reign;

Increase my courage, Lord:

I'll bear the cross, endure the pain,

Supported by thy Word."

I would rejoice if I could here, this night, be the means of melting the ice that binds the hearts of some halfway believers, and if the angel would trouble the sluggish pool in others. May God help you, friends, to feel a sense of your duty, and, like these honest Samaritans named in the text, "believe the things spoken concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, and be baptized, both men and women."

—Life and Labors of Elder John Kline, 1854.

Of many things my mother did

I'd often question why.

Then she would turn and look at me

And with a smile reply,

"I have a reason."

We're all small children in God's sight;

We question, but we know He's right

And has a reason.

We'll never understand it all,

Why ills sometimes to us befall,

But there's a reason

—J.G. Hootman, Modesto, Calif.

FAITH FROM ASHES

The word "faith" is one of the most important in the language of mankind. It is rather easy for one to think of faith as merely hoping, with enthusiasm, that something we desire may come to pass with certainty. But genuine faith is based upon facts which are proved every minute of every day. There is no speculation or doubt concerned with valid faith. It is something which is factual. It is a plain, unimpeachable knowledge of foreordained reality. And faith is the primary factor implementing all Christian beliefs, and practices.

Reasoning has no part on the makeup of faith. And here is where many Christians make a mistake. They do not realize that they can reason themselves away from real faith! We do not become true followers of Jesus by any method of reasoning, although the Gospel will stand the test of any degree of reasoning because it is Reason itself. We walk only by faith. There is no element of trial or error connected with it. It is the result of a full knowledge of God, of the acceptance of Christ and His atonement and love, and the conscious indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Faith is like steel. Its strength is measured by fire and it is born of fire. All of the faith elements may be present, but they must be proved by fire. As we read of the great characters in the Bible, we know that their faith became fully matured through tests by fire. Faith is born of fire and it must be tested by fire. After the fiery trial has subsided and ashes remain, faith emerges through the still live coals of experience and truth. If it does not manifest itself thus, it is dead. Faith is like the imaginary phoenix bird. It will survive the fire to prove itself. Until the fiery test, faith's depths is an unknown quantity. From the days of Noah until the present day, God has seen to it that the faith of the faithful is purified through fire.

There are enough illustrations of the truth of faith in the Bible to convince the most skeptical person and the most shallow so-called Christian whose belief is

but a reed shaking in the wind. As we read of Abraham, we can readily understand why he was rightly called the father of the faithful. His trial was outstanding and offers a constant challenge to us. Peter rightly said that the trial of our faith is more precious to God than gold. It is in this trial that God gets right down to "where we live" and tests us in the only way we can prove ourselves. And constant tests of faith must be seen in the light of reaffirmations of it and retention of it.

Faith, in the turmoil and troubles of this disorganized world, is like a lamp burning in the recess of a deep, dark cave. Out of the ashes and embers of sin, tribulations, vexations, temptations, and sorrows, faith finds a rich soil in which it implants itself and grows. Born of such conditions, it is a live, throbbing power that transcends all other elements in human life. It is living proof of the living God! The warmth of His presence is felt.

It was Mandeville who said: "Ye children of promise, who are awaiting your call to glory, take possession of the inheritance that now is yours. By faith take the promises. Live upon them, not upon emotions. Remember, feeling is not faith. Faith grasps and clings to the promises. Faith says, 'I am certain,' not because feeling testifies to it, but because God says it."

Our apostolic heritage and power from on High must be implemented by our faith. And when faith has been tried, tempered, and proved by fire, we know we have the promises and have no hesitancy in boldly approaching the throne of God with our petitions and need for direction. Faith through Christ, fed by the Holy Spirit, shines with the beauty of holiness and in the driving power of Pentecost in all its majesty. No matter how great the fire, faith always rises from the ashes, carrying live, hot coals with it to burn out carnality and provide power for fiery testimony. Residue from ashes is the most valuable part of the results of the fire.-- Gospel Herald, 1957

FROM "WESTERN VOICE"

O the pity of it, that so many of the Lord's people are stone blind to the perils of the hour, failing utterly to see that the same serpent, who wrought in Eden, and sought to disrupt the apostolic church, and so prevent the gospel, that if God had not put His Spirit in men like Paul and Peter, who stood like rocks against the tide that surged against them, it would have failed utterly. O the pity of it; that God's own people do not see that we are facing a thing as black as Luther faced in the days of the Reformation. It is the same thing that Luther fought against. The people of God ought to understand that the just shall live by faith, that we shall have no fellowship with any other gospel than that. What a blessing, then, it is to be free in Christ.

He is no free man, or person, when he desires that which is forbidden.—Selected by Mary Yost, Camden, Ind.

NOTICE OF LOVEFEAST DATE

The Salida congregation has selected April 28-29 for the date of their Spring Lovefeast; the Lord willing. The usual invitation is extended to members and friends to attend.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

We thank all of our subscribers who have been so prompt in renewing their subscriptions. A large number of our subscriptions are dated from Jan. 1st, and a self addressed envelope and coupon was included in the Jan. number of those due at that time.

Although we make special effort to post your subscription immediately upon receipt it is possible that some error might occur occasionally. If you have sent your subscription, and it is not recognized by a change of the expiration date with your name and address on the mailing envelope, please notify us so we can make the necessary correction.—Editor

Historical

CONSTANTINE AND THE CHURCH

CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH. We have already described the free and independent constitution of the primitive Church; the Bishops, and teachers were chosen by the clergy and people; the Bishop managed the ecclesiastical affairs of his diocese, in council with the Presbyters, and 'with a due regard to the suffrages of the whole assembly of the people.' Again, the great ecclesiastical divisions of the empire appear from the earliest period naturally to have followed the political; and thus for the regulation of matters relating to the interests of a whole Province, whether they were religious controversies, or the forms and rites of divine service, or other things of like moment, the Bishops of the Province assembled in council, and deliberated and legislated.

We have also remarked, that during the course of the third century this constitution was so far changed, that the episcopal authority was somewhat advanced, at the expense of that of the inferior ministers and the people. But in all other respects the government of the Church remained in reality the same, and perhaps even in this respect it was apparently so; for the forms of the lesser or diocesan councils were still preserved, though the relative influence of the three parties composing them had undergone a change.

And here it will be proper to examine how far those are correct who consider the Church at that period, as a separate Republic or Body-politic distinguished from the empire. In the first place—the synods which we have mentioned, local as well as provincial, assumed the office and power to arrange ecclesiastical affairs, and to punish ecclesiastical offences. But neither was their power acknowledged by the civil Government, nor were their awards or censures enforced by it. Again,

the Bishop, through an authority which professed to be derived from Scripture, and which may certainly be traced to the earliest age, exerted a kind of mediative interference throughout his diocese, in the civil disputes of the Christians, to which they very frequently appealed, and admitted his decisions as conclusive; but no such jurisdiction was recognised by the Government, nor were any such decisions legally valid. Moreover some of the Churches had become possessed, as corporate bodies, of considerable property in land or buildings purchased from the common fund, and applied to the purposes of the society; but the Government never formally acknowledged the legality of those acquisitions, and availed itself, as we have already seen, of the first pretext to confiscate them.

It is in this condition of ecclesiastical affairs, that we may discover perhaps the earliest vestige of the distinction, which will hereafter become so familiar to us, between spiritual and temporal power—though in the present indefinite shape and imperfect development of the former, we can scarcely trace any intimation of its future proportions and magnitude. We perceive also, on how strange and irregular a foundation the security of the early church was established—in fact, to a statesman of those days, before the force of religious union and the intensity of religious attachment were generally known and understood, the society or communion which rested not on a political basis, would naturally appear to possess no principle of stability. To the eye of a Pagan its strength was imperceptible, as the elements which composed it were concealed from him; and it was this circumstance which encouraged Diocletian to an aggression, of which the barbarity indeed shocked him but of which he never, perhaps, doubted the success, since the power which resisted it was unseen and incomprehensible. In the mean time, the public discipline, which had been made necessary by the neglect of the civil power, was cemented and fortified by its opposition; and the private sincerity of belief, which could not be understood by a Pagan, because Paganism had nothing to do with Truth,

was animated into contumacy by the sense of injustice and injury.

It is even probable, that the union of the scattered Churches was facilitated by the increase of the episcopal authority in each; for they thus acquired that decision and steadiness of continuous exertion, which marks individual superintendence, and which would scarcely have been so constant and uniform had the government of the dioceses retained, in its utmost strictness, its original popular character. The power of the Bishops made them formidable only to the persecutor; their interests demanded their union and their union was then the only security for that of the whole Church, and thereby (without the direct interposition of Providence) for its actual preservation.

To us, indeed, it seems nearly certain, that these powerful but latent principles of ecclesiastical stability, which repelled the assault of Diocletian, would have preserved the Church through a much severer trial, if the genius of Constantine had not discovered its real strength, and courted its friendship and alliance. It is true, that in becoming acquainted with its strength, he also discovered its virtues; in the excellence of the Christian system he perceived a great omen of its perpetuity—he saw too, that, as a rule for civilized society, it was more efficient than any human law, because more powerful in its motives to obedience; and perhaps he remarked also, that the energy of Christians had hitherto been confined to submission and endurance—to unoffending, unresisting perseverance—and this outward display of loyalty might lead him to overlook that free spirit, which pervaded both the principles of the religion and the government of the Church, and which in later ages was so commonly found in opposition to despotism.

Constantine admired the morality of the Christians, he loved their submission to arbitrary power, and he respected that internal and advancing vigor, which had triumphed over so many persecutors. These, we doubt not, were the motives which induced him to seek the alliance of the Church, and to confer on it advantages,

not more substantial, perhaps, than those which he received from it.

We are disposed to divide the ecclesiastical life of Constantine into three periods. In the first of these he confined himself, at least ostensibly, to the impartial toleration of all religions, though he legally established that of the Christians. This extends from the Edict of Milan to the council of Nice in the year 325. His next occupation was to define the doctrines and thus to preserve the unity of the Church, which he had established. It was not till the third and latest period of his life, that he attacked the superstition of his forefathers, by edicts directly levelled against Paganism. The Arian controversy and the overthrow of Paganism will form the subjects of separate chapters—at present we shall endeavor to point out the most important alterations introduced during this reign into the constitution of the Church, and their immediate effects upon its ministers and members.— Waddington's History of The Church

SIMON PETER (Continued from back page)

comes again.

Peter said that he would lay down his life for Jesus, and Jesus told him, "The cock will not crow till thou hast denied me thrice." And so it was as the Lord had said to him. He did deny Jesus three times, and the cock crew, and Peter, remembering what the Lord had said, went out and wept bitterly.

In the acts of the apostles, Peter seems to be recognized as the leader of the apostles. It was he that preached on the day of Pentecost, concerning the Lord's promise to send the Holy Ghost, and said to those who cried out "What shall we do?", "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." It is said that Peter felt unworthy to be put to death in the same manner as our Lord, and, on his request, was crucified with his head downward.

—Philip Chambers, Modesto, Calif.

"WHEN THOU PASSEST THROUGH THE WATERS"

Is there any heart discouraged as it journeys
on its way?
Does there seem to be more darkness than there
is of sunny day?
Oh! it's hard to learn the lesson, as we pass
beneath the rod,
That the sunshine and the shadow serve alike
the will of God!
But there comes a word of promise, like the
promise in the bow—
That, however deep the waters, they shall never
overflow.

When the flesh is worn and weary, and the spirit
is depressed,
And temptations sweep upon it like a storm
upon ocean's breast,
There's a haven ever open for the tempest driven
bird,
There's a shelter for the tempted in the promise
of the word;
For the standard of the Spirit shall be raised
against the foe,
And, however deep the waters, they shall never
overflow.

When a sorrow comes upon you that no other soul
can share,
And the burden seems too heavy for the human heart
to bear,
There is one whose grace can comfort, when He takes
up His abode;
For the precious promise reaches to the depths
of human woe,
That, however deep the waters, they shall never
overflow.

When the sands of life are ebbing, and I hear the
Jordan's shore,
When I see its waters rising, and I hear
billows roar,
I will reach my hand to Jesus, in his bosom I
shall hide,
And 'twill only be a moment till I reach the
other side.
It is then the fullest meaning of the promise
I shall know—
"When thou passest through the waters, they
shall never overflow."

Isaiah 43: 2

Selected by Mary Hitch, Sonora, Calif.

CHARACTERS OF THE BIBLE

SIMON PETER

The Apostle Peter was the son of a man named Jona. He was a fisherman by trade. It seems as though Peter and his brother Andrew were partners of John and James, the sons of Zebedee, in the fishing business. They also were disciples of John the Baptist.

Jesus said to Peter, "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona. Thou shalt be called Cephas (meaning a stone). Then at a later time our Lord asked Peter, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said unto him, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church."

It certainly would seem that Peter, in his confession that Jesus Christ was the Son of God showed his wonderful devotion to our Lord, for there was no hesitation in his answer to Jesus' question. He just said plainly Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to Peter, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

It certainly would be wonderful if we as Christians who have made our confession that Jesus is the Son of God, and that he brought from heaven a saving gospel, could show more of this wonderful energy and zeal to the furthering of our Lord's work, as did Peter.

At the Lord's supper, when the Lord began to wash the disciples' feet, Peter said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Our Lord said to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Peter said, "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." The Lord went on to tell us that we ought to wash one another's feet, for he said, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

It seems that many churches today, no longer practice the ordinance of feet-washing, but our Lord expressed His will when he said, "If I your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet." Again he said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." John 14:15. I feel that our Lord will find some keeping this commandment when he

(Continued on page 20)

THE PILGRIM

VOL. 9

APRIL-MAY

NOS. 4-5

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

"WHO ARE THESE IN BRIGHT ARRAY"

Who are these in bright array
This innumerable throng
Round the Alter, night and day,
Tuning their triumphant song?
"Worthy is the Lamb, once slain,
Blessing, honour, glory, power;
Wisdom, riches to obtain
New dominion every hour.

These through fiery trials trod;
These from great affliction came,
Now before the throne of God,
Sealed in His eternal name,
Clad in raiment pure and white,
Victor palms in every hand;
Through their great Redeemer's might,
More than conqueror's they stand.

Hunger, thirst, disease unknown,
On immortal fruits they feed;
Them the Lamb amidst the throne,
Shall to living fountains lead;
Joy and gladness banish sighs;
Perfect love dispels their fears;
And forever from their eyes
God shall wipe away their tears.

--James Montgomery 1819
Selected by J. I. Cover, Sonora, Calif.

THE PILGRIM is a religious magazine published monthly by Daniel F. Wolf in the interests of the members of The Old Brethren Church. Subscription rate: \$1.50 per year. Sample copies sent free on request. Address: THE PILGRIM, Rt. 3, Box 1378, Modesto, Calif.

WILL THE OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS BE A PART OF THE BRIDE OF CHRIST?

This question is raised by the school of interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures now known as "Dispensationalism," which was first introduced into Protestant Christianity about the middle of the nineteenth century by an ex-clergyman of the Church of England J. N. Darby, who was the founder of the Plymouth Brethren in England.

There is some variation in the accounts of different authors on the rise and history of Dispensationalism as to the exact date of its origin. But there is general agreement that it was unknown to the church in its present form, which includes the Pre-tribulation rapture of the church, until it was introduced by Darby.

We are told that Darby first published his views in England sometime after 1830, and in America about 1859, where they found a strong advocate in James H. Brooks, and were later popularized by the Scofield Reference Bible. Other prominent names associated with the movement were: Nathaniel West, W.J. Erdman, A.J. Gordon, D.L. Moody, and others.

Professor Albertus Pieters of Grand Rapids Mich. says that Darby taught that

The church, the Bride of Christ, must be limited to those true believers who live between the first and second comings of Christ. Old Testament saints, and those saved during the period or periods after the Second advent, do not belong to it. With this Bride of Christ prophecy has nothing to do. It is a "parenthesis" in history. Prophecy has to do only with the fortunes of Israel considered as a racial and national unit. Christ came and offered himself to the Jews as their king, but since they rejected him, the offer to set up his kingdom and become their king was withdrawn. It will be renewed and accepted at the time of the end. This is called the "postponed kingdom theory." During this parenthesis period, they say, Christ is not fulfilling prophecy, He is calling out a church from among the Gentiles,

We are further told that for Darby the church was strictly the "invisible church of the truly regenerate only; that he had little use for the outwardly organized church as historically manifested. That "the important and distinctive contribution of Darby's dispensationalism was that prophecy is silent concerning the church age."

There were other dispensational views in the church before Darby's, but his notions that the Old Testament prophecies were silent concerning the church age, that the church is unrelated to the Old Testament saints and promises concerning the kingdom, and, therefore, interrupting prophecy instead of fulfilling it, and that there will be a secret pre-tribulation rapture of the church seven years before the second coming of Christ, were intirely new and novel in the eighteen hundred years of the history of the church when they were introduced by Darby. But these ideas have been vigorously propagated by a number of prominent liberal Fundamentalist churchmen and Bible institutes in America, and greatly popularized by the Scofield Reference Bible until many sincere Christians of our generation accept them as Bible truths without question.

Against this background of modern dispensationalism I have frequently been asked if the "Old Testament saints" will be a part of "the Bride of Christ?" In a letter from a good brother, several years ago, the questions were asked: "Is there different degrees of heirship? Are the heirs and the Bride going to be the same body? Who are the subjects of this kingdom? Does Matt. 25:34, 'Come ye blessed' mean the heirs or the subjects? Are the grafted-in-again Israel going to be the Bride?"

Although there are a number of inferences in the New Testament that the "church" is the "Bride of Christ" (and I think it is generally conceded by Bible students to be so), it will be necessary, in order to answer this question Biblically, to define the Church.

There is only one passage in all the Bible which positively identifies the "Bride, the Lamb's wife." It is Rev. 21:9,10, where it is said, "And there came

unto me, one of the seven angels . . . and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. . . . And he shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, . . . " Verse 2 of the same chapter infers the same, and calls it the "New Jerusalem." The components and dimensions of this "holy Jerusalem, the bride, the Lamb's wife, are a mystery, but in the gates and foundations of the wall of it, are names of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles of the Lamb, which shows the united relationship of the Old and New Testament people of God.

The question may now be asked, if this holy New Jerusalem of Rev. 21:2,9,10, is the same "City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. . . the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn" of Heb. 12:22,23? Is it the same "Jerusalem which is above . . . and the mother of us all (Gal. 4:26)? " Is it the same "city" which Abraham sought, "which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10)?" Heb. 11:13-16 says, those heroes of faith, which, up to that point, included Abel, Enoch, and Noah, all died in faith, having not received the promises (the things promised), but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth. . . . But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

We believe all these are descriptions of the same "city of the living God" which is the "holy Jerusalem, the Bride the Lamb's wife" of Rev. 21:9,10, and also the "general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven," which is the church of Jesus Christ. In Eph. 2:20 the "prophets" are also included in this building which grows into an "holy temple in the Lord."

How exclusive shall we be if Old Testament saints are to be excluded from this "City of God? Can we exclude Abraham the father of the faithful in whom the covenant and promise was made before of God in Christ

Gal. 3:16,17? Can we exclude David, who was promised the eternal dynasty and kingdom (II Sam. 7:16)? How about Anna and Simeon and Zacharias and Elizabeth? And Moses and Elias, who were with Jesus in the mount of transfiguration, and had a keen interest in his sacrificial death which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem? What is meant by Moses "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward?" Jesus said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad."

In view of these Scriptures, and others yet to be cited, we do not believe the claim of dispensationalism that the Church of Jesus Christ is unrelated to the Old Testament saints and promises can be sustained.

This idea seems to overlook the great cardinal doctrine of Christianity and the Church, as especially enunciated by the Apostle Paul, that FAITH is the relationship of the children of God to Him and ALL His promises, and not human geneology. This is proven in Heb. 3:18,19 where he says, "And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." The apostle Jude teaches the same in verse 5. Therefore the apostle Paul teaches over and over in all his epistles, and especially in Ephesians that the family of the faithful in all ages are united in one body in Jesus Christ, and are there by both the "seed of Abraham" and children of God and heirs of the promises.

Somehow the question, "Will the Old Testament saints be a part of the Bride of Christ" does not seem properly directed. It seems, in the light of the teaching of the apostle Paul, and other New Testament writers as well, that the question more properly should be, "What relation do WE have to the Old Testament saints, and what part do we have in their promised blessings?" This is emphatically impressed in the apostle Paul's epistle to the Galatians (chap. 3:7-29):

"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing

(Continued on page 66)

TOO MANY CHRISTIANS AFRAID OF DEATH

On the last day of the year in 1889, Robert Browning was buried in Westminster Abbey. The famous cathedral was crowded to the doors with sorrowing people. Although the funeral service of the Church of England was dignified and impressive, one worshiper, Burne-Jones, the renowned artist, became increasingly restive and impatient. He was waiting for a note of triumph to be sounded. Afterwards he said that he kept longing for someone to appear in the chancel and wave a brave banner, or for one of the choristers to mount the triforium and blow a resounding blast on a trumpet. The note of the trumpet, challenging, arresting, defiant, triumphant was what he wanted to hear. And why not? For who among the British poets looked upon death with a more fearless gaze than Robert Browning?

Right at this point is one of the major weaknesses in our Christian witness today. Far too many Christians are afraid of death. They are terrorized and victimized by it. They lay hold upon every possible synonym to avoid mentioning the word death. They meet bereavement not in the triumphant spirit of the Easter faith, but rather as though Jesus had never lived, as though He had never died and risen again. Why have we crowded our cemeteries with broken columns, quenched torches, shattered vases, sealed urns, and weeping willows? These things are not the symbols of a living, victorious faith. They represent a pagan acceptance of the finality of death.

In the latter half of the 19th century, when archaeologists began excavating Italian cemeteries at Volterra, Italy, and at the site of ancient Roman towns near Perugia, on many tombstones they found seven letters—N.F.F. N.S. N.C. They were puzzled as to their meaning until on certain tombstones they found the full inscription. These letters stood for an ancient proverb that had grown so familiar that the Romans had ceased to write the words out in full. This is how the Latin

inscription read: "Non fui, fui non sum, non curo." When translated it reads: "I was not; I was; I am not: I do not care." Think of one generation after another burying its dead—husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, and little children—in this mood of utter disillusionment and cynicism: "I was not; I was; I am not; I do not care." This is a creed, of course, but it is the creed of the spiritually weary, the disbelieving, the sordidly cynical.

This, too, was the mood of much of the ancient world into which Christ came. It was a world without hope. Night had descended—a long, silent night relieved only by the trampling feet of those who stumbled in the dark. Into that world came Jesus Christ with a divine revelation that was destined to illumine the whole earth. It was a literal fulfillment of Zacharias' remarkable prophecy: "The dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death."

When Jesus preached to the multitude in Galilee or addressed His disciples privately, He spoke as familiarly of the life of the world to come as He might have spoken of neighboring Judea. On the night of the betrayal, with the shadow of the cross darkening every horizon about the disciples, our Lord gave them a farewell message. He said: "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." While He was going to be parted from them for a while, death, He said, was just like passing from one home to another. "I will make ready for you," He continued, "and when your place is prepared, I will come and receive you unto myself." Death means just a change of residence from the cramped quarters of earth to the Father's spacious home on high.

Paul was not present when Jesus uttered these words, but he accepted them gratefully. When the shadows began to gather around his own life, he wrote to his friends in the Corinthian church: "If this earthly tent of mine is taken down, I shall receive a home from God, made by no human hands, eternal in the heavens."

James Barrie, the brilliant and tender Scottish author, tells us that he seldom took up his mother's Bible

but that it opened of its own accord at the 14th chapter of John. That has been true of many another saint. That chapter has inspired and comforted souls in every generation of Christian history, and brought light to those who were nearing the valley of the shadow of death.

The shock of the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus was all the greater for His disciples because they had not understood the full import of these words of the Master. They found it impossible to conceive that their mighty Friend could be overtaken by disaster and brutal death, that the forces of evil could win what seemed to be a final victory over Him.

Oftentimes I have tried to picture in imagination the mood of the disciples on the first Easter morning. The key to understanding it one may find in a museum in Paris, where a notable painting by Eugene Burnand, a Swiss artist, is on exhibition. Copies of it have gone all around the world. In the painting we see Peter and John on Easter morning racing for the empty tomb in Joseph's garden. Mary Magdalene had told the disciples that the tomb was empty, and that she had had a vision of the risen Lord.

The two disciples are running at top speed, their bodies bent forward in their eager haste. Their hair is blowing in the wind, and their garments float behind them. The artist concentrates all his genius on the face of Peter. His features are seamed with trouble and sorrow, and his eyes are sunken with much weeping. His countenance is channeled with lines of grief like bleak hillsides which have been torn with heavy rains. There is hope in his face, but it is hope dimmed by fear and dread. He secretly fears that the report of the resurrection may be true, and he dreads the shame of meeting his risen Lord after his cowardly oaths and denials in the courtyard of Caiaphas. This was the mood of all the disciples. It was only by degrees that the sublime truth broke upon the benumbed minds of these men who had followed Jesus. Slowly they awoke in a re-created world.

Once again we are indebted to Luke for what is the

most graphic story of our Lord's appearance to His followers after the resurrection. The Greek physician alone records the walk to Emmaus. It presents every element of the resurrection experience.

Joseph Fort Newton calls this chapter in Luke the sublimest passage in the New Testament. There we see two disillusioned, bewildered followers of Christ conversing dejectedly upon the highway that winds westward from Jerusalem. They say, "We had hoped that it was he that should redeem Israel." A Stranger has joined them and their hearts burn within them as He opens to them the Scriptures and shows how the Old Testament prophets and seers predicted the coming of a Redeemer. Their souls must have thrilled as He repeated the words of the prophet Isaiah: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

Suddenly with divine illumination the stark tragedy of Calvary took on a new meaning. At last they understood what John the Baptist meant when, pointing to the Master by the Jordan, he said: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" Having reached their destination, they implored the Stranger to tarry with them, for the lengthening shadows betokened the close of another day.

As they sat at table for the evening meal, the Guest, this strange and wondrous Guest, forsook His role and became host to these men. He took bread and blessed it and brake it. What happened at this moment? Was it a characteristic gesture or movement of His head, a familiar word or look? Or did they for the first time catch a glimpse of those nail-pierced hands that broke the bread? In any case, suddenly they knew Him. "It is the Master!" one of them cried. And instantly He vanished from sight.

The impact of these contacts with the risen Christ were sufficiently real to change the lives of these disheartened disciples. They became transformed men. The Gospel of the resurrection, which they preached all

across the ancient world, shook the souls of men and women and made them disciples of the crucified but risen Christ. That Gospel demonstrated that love can conquer hate, and that life is ever lord of death. It made vile men clean. It changed weak men into spiritual giants. It transformed cowards into heroes and broken reeds into pillars of steel. It set a quenchless torch by every Christian grave. It made these followers of Christ unconquerable.

When Christian men and women throughout the Roman Empire refused to offer idolatrous reverence to the image of the emperor, the authorities resolved to exterminate these stubborn people. Nero attempted to strangle Christianity in its cradle. Hear what sober historians have written: "Christians were tied to the heels of wild horses and dragged to their death. They were sewn up in the skins of wild animals and torn to bits by ferocious dogs. They were thrown into the arena to be slain by lions. They were daubed with pitch and placed on poles as living torches to light up the further cruelties in Nero's garden."

But listen to how one of the great Christian leaders of that early period answered their torturers: "Go on, good Governors, and destroy us. The more you mow us down, the more we increase, for the blood of the martyrs is the seed from which new Christians spring. The teeth of these beasts will but grind us into white flour for the pure bread of Christ." They were the despair of the Roman authorities, for these Christians had lost all fear of death. Fear of death is the mother of all fear. When it is destroyed, every form of fear is vanquished.

As late as the third century of the Christian era, the emperor Diocletian subjected the church to ten years of the worst persecution it had yet suffered. At the end of that decade he had medals struck and given to all his lieutenants and officers. It bore this inscription: "The Christians are no more." But what has history to say on that subject? What is the testimony of the long centuries? It is this: Diocletian is no more. He has returned to dust and to oblivion. But

the Christ whose name he blasphemed and whose followers he persecuted rises higher and ever higher in the love and devotion of men. And today it is freely recognized that He is the world's only hope.

Would to God that in our own time, men and women who have named the name of Christ could show something of this ancient spirit of heroism and self-sacrifice instead of the anemic, bloodless, unheroic witness we too often give for Christ. The Gospel of the resurrection—what a message is this for our feverish, fearridden, and death-embracing generation. Here is forgiveness. Here is salvation. Here is wholeness for man. Here is victory over fear and sin and death. Out of the dark shadows of the tomb on Easter morning stepped forth One whose omnipotent shoulders lift every barred gate and who has shattered all the bonds of death. He is the Lord of life, the Conqueror of death, alive forevermore!

—Selected from Gospel Herald, 1957.

THE CERTAINTY OF THE RESURRECTION

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus, of which an account is given in this chapter (Matt. 28), is one of the most important doctrines of the Christian religion, and is attested by the strongest evidence that can be adduced in favor of ancient fact. Let it be considered:

1. That He had foretold His own death and resurrection.
2. There was no doubt that He was really dead. Of this the Jews, the Romans, and the disciples were all equally well satisfied.
3. Every proper precaution was taken to prevent His removal by stealth.
4. On the third day the body was missing, and in this all were agreed. The high priests did not dare call this in question. They labored therefore to account for it. The disciples affirmed that He was alive. The Jews hired the Roman soldiers to affirm that He was stolen while they slept.

This account of the Jews is attended with the follow-

ing difficulties and absurdities:

1. The Roman guard was composed usually of sixty men, and they were stationed there for the express purpose of guarding the body of Jesus.

2. The punishment of sleeping on guard in the Roman army was death, and it is perfectly incredible that these soldiers should expose themselves in the manner to death.

3. The disciples were few in number, unarmed, weak, and timid. They had fled before those who took Jesus in the garden, and how can it be believed that in so short a time they would dare to attempt to take away from a Roman guard of men what they were expressly set to defend?

4. How could the disciples presume that they would find the Roman soldiers asleep? or, if they should, how was it possible to remove the stone without awakening even one of them?

5. The regularity and order of the graveclothes. When men rob graves, they do not leave the clothes in order.

6. If the soldiers were asleep, how did they, or how could they know that the disciples stole the body? If they were awake, why did they suffer it? The whole account, therefore, was intrinsically absurd.

On the other hand, the account given by the disciples is perfectly natural and credible:

1. They account for the reason the soldiers did not see Jesus when He arose. They were terrified by the angel.

2. They affirmed that they saw Him. All the disciples affirmed this, and many others.

3. They affirmed it in Jerusalem, in the presence of the Jews, before the high priests and the people. If the Jews really believed the disciples stole the body, why did they not apprehend the apostles and prove them guilty of theft and falsehood—things which they never attempted?

4. In regard to the Saviour they could not be deceived. They knew Him three years. They ate and drank with Him; they put their fingers into His hands and

side. They conversed with Him, and were with Him forty days.

5. They gave every possible evidence of their sincerity. They were persecuted, ridiculed, scourged, and put to death for affirming this. Yet not one of them ever expressed the least doubt of the truth. They bore everything rather than deny that they had seen Him.

—Selected

NEW TESTAMENT IMPERATIVES

God's grace is not the only truth set forth in the New Testament. It is undoubtedly one of the greatest, and one that brings great comfort to sinner and saint. However, it is always dangerous to lay too much stress on any one truth. Some speakers and writers have put such emphasis on grace, without the proper safeguards, that some young people and new believers have been mistakenly led to think that after they are saved God requires very little of them. They have supposed that the power of sin in their lives was overcome once for all; but grievous falls have often brought great discouragement and the thought that probably their salvation was not real after all. While there is indeed a rest of faith, set forth in Hebrews 3 and 4 and other passages, Paul did exhort his son in the faith, Timothy, to "fight the good fight of faith" (I Tim. 6:12). Surely he did not expect Timothy to do this in his own strength, for Paul had said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). Paul also understood the tendency of human nature to distort God's truth and presume on His grace, so he said, "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid" (Rom. 6:15).

Recently the writer has made a careful study of the imperatives in the New Testament and counted all he could find. He did not include those that had a purely local application, as when the Lord told the palsied man to pick up his bed and go to his house (Matt. 9:6). But he did count separately commands repeated in the

Gospels, considering that if the Spirit (the Author) recorded them two or three times, it was quite legitimate to count them. The writer numbered those that he believes apply to us today, and found 656. Probably no two people would arrive at exactly the same total; but allowing for variations, and repetition in the Gospels, it seems safe to say that there are over five hundred.

It is a profitable and humbling experience to go through them, for when we do, we realize how ignorant or careless we have been in respect to God's commandments, and how far short of His standards we have fallen. Then we can raise no objection to being included in that sweeping condemnation, "For in many things we offend all" (Jas. 3:2). A study of these imperatives, or commands, also will lead us to remember that we must be exceedingly cautious in our criticism of others; and that most of the time we shall have all we can do, with the aid of the indwelling Spirit, to put into practice what we know from God's Word.

— Sunday School Times, 1961

MAN REBELS AGAINST GOD.

by L.I. Moss

A careful study of the book of Jude and other portions of the Bible, and then consider the records of the early church, and in Germany and on to America. There has been a condition much the same all along with professing people.

The book of Jude was dated A.D. 66. A long while ago. Some sad things have happened, which caused the writer to exhort the brethren to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. Why? Because there were certain men crept in unawares. In verse 4 they are described as ungodly men, even denying the Lord God and Jesus Christ.

See how the Lord dealt with the children of Israel whom he delivered out of Egypt, and then destroyed many because they believed not. In verse 6 see how God dealt with the angels who kept not their first estate.

Get the lesson how God dealt with Sodom and Gomorrah and other cities. These are examples for us. Verse 8 tells about those who defile the flesh, despise dominion, speak evil of dignities.

We are living in a time when many church people do not want to be told how to live. They rail on elders and ministers who try to lead them right. In fact they think they know more than men called of God as elders and ministers.

When Mack and Becker, called of God to lead the church they met this class of people. The Apostolic church met the same, just as Jude speaks of them, they crept in and caused trouble.

Now verse 10, These speak evil of things they know not. They are mentioned as brute beasts. This brings corruption. Verse 11 speaks of them running for reward. What kind of reward are they wanting? Verse 12 brings some sad thoughts for us to think about. This class of people have crept into the church. They are spots in your feasts. The early church had them all the way from the apostles down to now. Oh, what harm they do, but we must earnestly contend for the faith. Verse 13 still makes a dark picture, but tells what their end will be. Verse 14, the Lord cometh to execute judgment.

Many have in the past, and are still among church professors doing just as verse 15 says. I am glad the Lord will take care of judging these wicked people.

Men speak great swelling words of vanity, for man's honor and for financial gain.

Well, the apostles told us these mockers would come. They were here in A.D.66. They were here when Mack, Becker and others preached the gospel. And they are here now.

May God keep us true to his word and not rebel against Christ and his word. His word shall judge us in the last day. In conclusion let us remember that those who refuse to obey the gospel not only rebel against the church but also against God.

—Bradford, Ohio

THE VALUE OF A SINGLE DAY

Most of us live as if we thought we had about a hundred years to stay here. We do not see how swiftly the sun is whirling toward his setting, while our work is but half done, our task perhaps scarcely begun. We fritter away days not noticing how our own little opportunity of living in the world is being run off as the sea cuts away a sand-bank till its last shred is gone. We set slight value on time, forgetting that we have only a handbreadth of it and then comes eternity. What did we do yesterday that will brighten that day forever? What record of blessing did we give to carry love and affection to others? What burden did we lift off another heart? What tear did we wipe away, on what soul did we leave a mark of beauty? Where is our yesterday? What is the value of a single day? So short a space we say, it cannot make much difference if one, just one is idled away, yet the days are linked in a chain and if one link is broken the chain is broken. Our plan for our life each day has its own record to make. Some gifts we often give, some only once. The seasons return again and again, the flowers change with the months, but youth comes twice to none. Youth is the time for us to be careful. The success of the after-life depends upon the proper course we lay out for ourselves. A wasted youth is followed by misfortune and failure. Youth is the time to gather knowledge, the time to form good habits to make good resolutions and the time to train the faculties for their best work in life. Late hours and high living may bring failure some time in the future. Learn while it is easy to learn. Write in your hearts that to-day is the best day of the year. Every day that passes leaves life's margin a little less for each of us. We must pour out the love to help the lonely. The love that we should show to-day may not be able to show tomorrow. There are a great many things it is not worth our while to do. Let us work while we have the light, do things that are most important, for who can tell that

before the going down of tomorrow's sun some of us may be through that wide valley of death, and from which destination no traveller has ever returned to tell the mysteries of that angelic city, Paradise, with the golden streets.

--Selected by Amos Baker.

THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF NON-CONFORMITY

PART II

THE CHRISTIAN AND WORLDLY AMUSEMENTS:

There is a teaching in many so-called Christian circles today, to the effect that the Christian life is a jolly affair, and that to follow Jesus is barrels of fun. Many of our modern churches ought to blow the steeple off their roof and hang up a night-club sign. They have more suppers, dances, and parties--than prayer meetings and Bible studies. The Bible principle on worldly amusements is given in Heb. 11: By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." There is the Bible principle on worldly pleasures, and if you have a popular brand of Christianity, you've got the wrong kind! Our Lord talked about the cost of discipleship: too many of us talk about how much fun it is. Within the soul of every man, there is an inner longing and a deep quest for peace of mind. The world tries to satisfy this quest which is common to all men by offering the movies, the dance, television, smoking, drinking, etc. The child of God does not need the momentary, short-lived satisfaction that this world pretends to offer, for the Bible says of our Lord God: "He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." Psalm 107: 9.

A. THE HOLLYWOOD MOVIES:

There may be some good Hollywood movies. There is

some good food in garbage cans too. . . . If you don't think that murder, sex, and free spending of money are major themes of Hollywood, then take a look at the theatre page of your local newspaper sometime. The filthier, the dirtier, the more degrading, the more lustful, the more suggestive, the more ungodly a film is, the bigger the hit it makes with the American public. Even Premier Krushchev of Russia made charges of immorality after viewing a cancan dance during his recent trip to Hollywood. Can you imagine a Christian supporting such filthy, immoral, ungodly pictures which are conceived in the heart of the devil himself? My blood runs cold to even think of a Christian's looking at that immoral stench of Hollywood!

B. TELEVISION:

Nearly all of the popular movies are later shown on television, and television makes a theatre out of your home. The television set is a mechanical device which is neither right or wrong. It is not wrong because it is new, but some of the immoral trash that is displayed on its screen is definitely wrong. The writer drove a school bus for a number of years. One evening a little girl about to get off the bus was crying, and declared that she did not want to go home. When asked why she didn't want to go home, she explained: "My parents were watching television last night, and one program showed a man crawling out from under a little girl's bed, and killing her. I couldn't sleep all night last night because I thought a man was under my bed, and would kill me. I don't want to go home." Listen friend—I'm glad I do not have to stand in those parents shoes on the judgment day. The Bible says it would be better if such parents had a millstone cast around their neck, and they were drowned in the depths of the sea, rather than offend such a little one!

The Bible says, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity." Psalm 119:37. That would be a good verse to paste above the screen of your television set. It begins with the letter "T" and ends with the letter "V", and is therefore fitting. A survey reveals that in the

course of one week (in one viewing area) there were ninety-one murders, four burglaries, seven stabbings, two jail-breaks, twenty holdups, two suicides, three kidnappings--all within one week. Eightyfive percent of these programs were broadcast before 9 p.m. while children were still watching, and to think that the average child spends almost thirty hours each week watching that sort of thing. You say, "But what about religious programs on television?" Of course there are some good programs, how dumb do you think the devil is? He could not get many to watch it if there were not some good programs, but most of the religious programs are merely a watered down version of the gospel, that are more deceiving than helpful. You say there is no difference between television and radio." But actually there is a difference. Its the difference between hearing about a murder and seeing one committed. Its the difference between hearing the voice of a seven-eights naked woman, and seeing her almost nude body dance before your very eyes. Its the difference between hearing an advertisement about beer and liquor, and having someone set up a bar in your living room to pour out the stuff before the eyes of your children. You know there's a difference, for if there is no difference, then why would people spend two or three hundred dollars to buy a television set, when its no different from the radio they had before?

There are many who wouldn't be caught dead in a moving-picture house, but they can watch T.V. for hours without any seeming convictions. Let's face it, you can see stuff on your T.V. screen that's just as raw as anything ever shown at the theatre down the street. Television spares you the shame of being seen in the wrong place, but it doesn't keep your soul from being dangerously damaged. Television (as a whole) glorifies impurity as love; pictures murder as entertainment; exalts nakedness and indecency as beauty; shows drinking and gun fights as proper and legitimate; ruins the influence of a Christian; debauches the mind of children; inflames the lust of youth; and hardens the hearts of sinners! And most people admit that the tendency

is to slip into more and more careless habits of watching whatever is to be seen.

C. DANCING:

The word "dance" is used many times in the Bible, but only a few times does it compare with the modern dance, and then it is condemned. When David danced, he danced alone. He didn't dance all over the streets of Jerusalem in the arms of another man's wife. David leaped and praised God for sheer joy! There was no embracing the opposite sex. He knew nothing of the waltz, the bunny-hug, and the two-step. No person in his right mind will deny that the modern dance, with its dim lights and suggestive music is solely for the purpose of getting the sexual thrill that comes from the contact of the bodies of those of the opposite sex. If you don't believe that, announce a special event some evening, "Dancing—men only", and see how many you get out! Anyone who says that the youth of both sexes can mingle in close embrace on the dance floor without suffering harm, is a liar, and you know that's true. I declare that the dance is an incubator of Hell—hatching out lust, sin, adultery, fornication, broken homes, and broken lives.

D. TOBACCO:

One third of America's forty million smokers are women. The heart of the infant fetus being carried by an expantant mother beats five times faster each minute while the mother is smoking, than it does under normal conditions. The University of Virginia says that the nicotine intake of the normal smoker is almost one pound per year. They fed an equivalent amount of nicotine to eight thousand cats—and it killed them all! Smoking is a dirty, nauseating habit. . . . The most tragic result, however, is the effect tobacco has on your own body. The Bible says that (if you are a Christian) your body is the temple (dwelling-place) of God. God says, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." I Cor. 3:17.

E. DRINKING:

There are millions of Americans who think that they can't spend a holiday, or celebrate a birthday without filling up on beer. People in our country are spending \$19,000 each minute for alcoholic beverages. The Bible says, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Prov. 20:1. And again in Galatians 5:19-21, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these. . . drunkenness. . . of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." . . .

We have pointed out some things that this world offers to bring satisfaction to the longing human heart. There are many others: card playing, chance taking, circuses and fairs, etc. Oh, I know you say, "We go to the fair only to see the exhibits"—but that's like going to a beer joint to get a glass of milk. Remember this: every step you take toward the world is a step away from Jesus Christ. The Bible says, "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord." II Cor. 6:17. The Bible also declares that the wicked are like the troubled sea, they cannot rest. On many a coffin, where the dead lay with folded hands, I have seen the two words "at rest." This is simply an acknowledgment that this sad, wicked, old world can not give rest. It pretends to offer satisfaction through dancing and drinking and smoking, but the thrills thrills at best are only temporary; they don't satisfy at all.

And now I want to look at the invitation of Jesus. He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matt. 11:28,29. Friend, there was a time in my life when I was afraid to live and I was afraid to die. But one day I was invited to accept the peace that Jesus offers when he says, "Come unto me and I will give you rest." I accepted, and since then, the things of this world have grown strangely dim. Will you not try Him too?

The Bible says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36.— Selected from "Bible Helps", by Alma Meade, in Bible Monitor

(Concluded)

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST (Continued from page 49)

that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham . . . That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through faith. . . For ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. . . And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

"For the promise that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is void, and the promise made of none effect. . . Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." Romans 4:13-16.

It is said of all those "Heroes of faith" in Heb. 11, "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. As it is plainly stated that they without us should not be made perfect, it is just as plainly inferred that they WILL BE made perfect with us. That is, that we will be heirs together of the same promise—neither is perfected separately, without the other. And, further, this promised perfection could not be realized before or apart from Christ and his redemptive work, which could not be completed until the atonement and resurrection were and are actually accomplished. See Rom. 8:23.

The context of Hebrews 11 must be found in all the previous chapters, of which chapter 9:11 shows particularly that Christ's atonement was retroactive to those under the law. See also Gal. 4:4,5. —D. F. W.

From Bethlehem to Nazareth,
From Nazareth to Galilee
To Jordon's banks, and Olivet,
From Olivet to Calvary.

So came He meekly in our stead
To bear for us the awful doom
The crown of thorns to wound His head,
The crucifixion, and the tomb.

He snapped death's strongest bonds in twain,
And tore asunder hell's strong gate
(At what a cost in peril and pain!)
That we might not be desolate.

Behold, what wondrous work is this:
The merits of His death He gives
To whomsoever will believe,
And now we live, because He lives.

— Selected

THE APOSTLE PAUL (Continued from back page)
work. His life as a minister of the gospel was not to prove easy, however. He met opposition from the Jews, who were unwilling to accept a crucified man as their Messiah. The question as to whether the Gentiles would have to follow the old Jewish law in order to be saved also arose. Paul was forced to endure many afflictions. He was lashed, beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecked, and in constant peril from his enemies. He succeeded in preaching the gospel throughout much of the known world of his time. It is said that he was beheaded near Rome in 66 A. D.

Paul's life is a good lesson for the Christian. It shows how a person, through ignorance, may fall into sin. Even though his sins may be great, he is able to come to the Lord and receive forgiveness when he realizes his condition. Paul proved, through his many trials, that the Lord will not forsake his children. In addition to the examples Paul has set, he left his epistles which contain a large portion of the Christian doctrine.—Glen Shirk, Modesto, California

CHARACTERS OF THE BIBLE
THE APOSTLE PAUL

The Apostle Paul was born in the city of Tarsus. As this was a free Roman city, he became a Roman citizen by birth. During his young life he studied under Gamaliel, a celebrated doctor of the Jewish law. At this time he was known as Saul of Tarsus. He is first introduced in the Bible in Acts 7:58, the account of the stoning of Stephen. He believed the teachings of Christ to be false and as such a stumbling block for God's chosen people, Israel. It was for this reason that he began to persecute the followers of Jesus. The record tells how he forcefully entered the homes of innocent people and committed them to prison (Acts 8:3).

Not being satisfied with his work in Jerusalem, Saul obtained letters from the high priest which would allow him to purge the synagogues of Damascus of the followers of Christ. This is indeed sad when one realizes that Saul felt that he was doing God's work. Thus Saul set out on a journey that was to make great changes in his life. As he was traveling along, he was suddenly struck by an intense bright light. Along with this came a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" When Saul asked who was speaking to him the voice replied, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." Truly, it is hard to realize just how much of a shock this must have been to Saul. All of his life he had endeavored to do the will of God. What a disappointment it must have been to find that in reality he had been working against God's will! One can not help but wonder what thoughts were going through his mind as he asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Perhaps he felt that his sin was so great that the Lord could not use him. If so, he must have been filled with joy when he found that the Lord had a place for him.

At the bidding of the Lord, he continued his journey to Damascus, blind and broken-hearted. There, his blindness was healed and he was baptized. Zealously, Paul, as he was now called, began a new life and a new

(Continued on page 67)

THE PILGRIM

VOL. 9

JUNE—JULY, 1962

NOS. 6-7

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

MY CREED

This is my creed: To live as I would
If I knew that today were my last;
To strive to do all that I can that is good.
To forgive the wrong done in the past.
As I'd close up my life, I would close up each day,
So that should I be summoned above
I could go to the Master and not have to say:
I left hate where I might have left love.
Tomorrow's too distant for me to repair
Any harm I have heedlessly done;
My record today must be spotless and fair,
My race must be openly run;
I must leave none behind at the close of the day,
As I'd leave none behind when I die,
Who would think of my work and then bitterly say
That I had been living a lie.
If tonight I am called to the Great Judge of all,
In the midst of the struggle and strife,
I should like him to know, though my deeds are
but small,
That I made the most out of my life.
That I carried my burdens as far as I could,
And I have no excuse to give,
That I toiled to the full of my powers for good,
And up to my best tried to live.

—Selected

THE PILGRIM is a religious magazine published monthly by Daniel F. Wolf in the interests of the members of The Old Brethren Church. Subscription rate: \$1.50 per year. Sample copies sent free on request. Address: THE PILGRIM, Rt. 3, Box 1378, Modesto, Calif.

THE ISRAEL OF GOD

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk by this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." Gal. 6:15, 16.

It is asserted by certain dispensational writers, that the apostle Paul is referring to two separate groups of people in this text. The first being members of the church of Christ, and the "Israel of God" being national Israel.

One writer on this subject declares: "That there are two separate groups being prepared in this world, to be called by two separate agencies, at two separate times in the future is quite apparent. In the one case angels are sent to do the gathering (Matt. 24:31), while in the other, Jesus Himself appears in person to receive unto Himself the New Testament believers (I Thess 4:16). . . . To speak of the church as the Israel of God is extremely confusing to say the least. Let us not attempt to combine the two."

But this is exactly what the apostle Paul says in Ephesians 2:13-16, has been done by Jesus on the cross. "But now in Christ Jesus ye (Gentiles) who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us. Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace. And that he might reconcile both (Jew and Gentile) unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity there-by.

The natural and reasonable interpretation of Gal. 6: 15, 16, is, that what is said in verse 15 is the basis or position for the benediction in verse 16, that is,

As many as walk by the rule that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but a new creature,—On them, each and every one, be peace and mercy, and also "peace and mercy" be upon the body or church as a whole, which is here called "the Israel of God."

This interpretation is supported by translations from several other versions of the New Testament as follows:

Twentieth Century New Testament:— "For neither is circumcision nor the omission of it anything; but a new nature is everything. May all who rule their conduct by this principle find peace and mercy—they who are the Israel of God."

Moffatt's Translation:— "For what counts is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, it is the new creation. On all who will be guided by this rule, may peace and mercy rest, even upon the Israel of God."

Revised Standard version:— "For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God."

It will be observed that this text is at the very conclusion of the epistle to the Galatians, which was written to save those who had been converted, by the gospel to the Christian faith, from turning again to the national Jewish religion in the observance of the rites and ordinances of the Mosaic law. Especially in chapters 3 and 4, Paul masterfully elucidates the doctrine that the true seed of Abraham and children of God are not by any national relationship, or observance of the law of Moses, or of the covenant of circumcision; but by virtue of faith in Jesus Christ and union with him in baptism. As he says also in Romans 9:6-8, "For they are not all Israel which are of Israel: neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Again in Romans 2: 28, 29, "For

he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

With this emphasis throughout the whole epistle of Galatians, which was the obvious reason for writing it, it seems unreasonable to suppose that Paul, in his conclusion, would suddenly change his subject and direction of thought to pronounce a benediction on the unbelieving and nationalistic Jews whom he considered disobedient and contrary to the gospel. In chapter 3:10 he said of them, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." And in 5:4, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." And, "I would that they were even cut off which trouble you."

Aside from reconciling this text with its context in the epistle to the Galatians, there are many other Scriptures which may be cited to support the belief that the apostles and New Testament converts to the faith of Christ, regarded the church as the true Israel of God.

The first and most important evidence of this fact is, that the church was founded, not of Gentiles or strangers from the "covenants of promise," but of a faithful remnant of the Old Covenant commonwealth of Israel to whom the promises were made. It consisted first of the chosen twelve, with whom Jesus confirmed the promised New Covenant when he gave them the cup of the New Testament (covenant) in the upper room, and then on the day of Pentecost there were three thousand of them who received the promised baptism of the Holy Ghost by which they became new creatures, or a new creatin in Christ Jesus of which He is the head. This was a truly Spiritual Israel, not a figurative Israel, but a born again Israel—born of the Spirit of God, by which they became true children of God through a faith relationship and covenant in Christ Jesus. Truly a nation was born at once, in answer to Isaiah's question chap. 66:8. "And the Lord added to the church daily

such as should be saved." Soon there were five thousand of them, then "multitudes" and then more "multitudes both of men and women"—all Israelites by natural birth; but now children of God by the new birth and their relation to Jesus Christ by the Spirit. These, including all the Gentiles that were admitted into the church since that time, must certainly be that numerous seed of the "children of promise" which Isaiah saw (54:1), and Paul describes in Gal. 4:27, "Rejoice thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband."

It is often objected that Israel "as a nation" did not accept Jesus as the Messiah." But there were many true faithful Israelites who did, and of them Jesus chose twelve apostles to be the new princes of the reborn nation, of which Christ is the true "Israel" (meaning Prince of God) and head. This was in conformity to the pattern of Israel of old which had twelve princes or heads of the tribes. And to these apostles Jesus said, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink with me in my kingdom, and sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The fact that the national rulers with a majority of the people did not believe in Jesus could not frustrate God's "eternal purpose and plan to establish and build his church. For Paul says in Romans 3:3, "What if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?"

Many dispensational writers readily, and apparently correctly, advocate that the "mystery" of which Paul writes in Eph. 3:3, is the church, but they hasten, then, to interpret it as a "parenthesis" or separated body, unrelated to God's Old Testament promises and people, apparently ignoring Paul's own explanation of this "mystery" in the immediate verses following:

"Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ. Which in other ages was not

(Continued on page 80)

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.

by L. I. Moss

Read Matt. 12:31,32. This was Christ who said this. It is stated it is possible to commit a sin which cannot be forgiven in this world nor in the world to come. I know there are many professors who say we need not trouble ourselves about this matter. Christians in this day ought to do some serious thinking. Luke 12:10 makes a brief statement. Christ says 'it shall not be forgiven'. What is blaspheming? It is to speak reproachfully or disrespectfully about someone. Mark 3:29 makes it very positive what the result will be. These three texts Christ himself said. And who dare question what Christ has said?

I John 5:16 makes it plain there is a sin like Christ mentioned in the three above texts, and we ought to know enough about it so we can understand what John tells us in I John 3:16. When a brother commits this sin we are not to pray for him. A very sad conditon. Some say when a person commits this sin he will not want us to pray for him. The Bible says nothing about that. This is a serious matter. Even if he does want our prayers and forgiveness there is no forgiveness, and Brethren should know these facts. Let us now read Heb. 6:4-6. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

The apostle says 'it is impossible for this class of people to be renewed again to repentance'. When God's word says it is impossible, that means it can not be done. They had attained to a high state of Christian life and then fell away. Some say when once saved we can never fall. That is not according to this scripture, and it is the inspired word of God.

Now read Heb. 10:26-31. This is another place where Paul makes it plain how very devout Christians may fall.

This is such a serious matter we ought to be on our guard.

Paul was inspired of God to write these things and we must believe them.

Now read very carefully, John 14:17. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

John was a servant of God, he knew the Holy Spirit, and records this as the language of Christ. The world knows nothing about the Holy Spirit, neither do the false teachers know him. Hence they could not blaspheme against someone they know not. So this is a subject entirely confined to Brethren who fall. There are some other texts some people try to apply to this subject. Some might be questioned, but these above used are very definite. Read them carefully and pray over them.

—Bradford, Ohio.

Editor's note:

While we believe the above article is biblical, we beg that no poor soul should judge themselves wrongly and despair, if they are willing to repent and still desire to follow the Lord. No one can make provision to commit sin, or continue to live in sin and be guiltless. And we dare not offer any comfort to any who would presume to do so. But we have been approached by some who desire to walk honestly and obediently in the commandments of the Lord, but are troubled by some past sin, and fear they may have committed the unpardonable sin. Such persons need help and should read I John 1: 8-10. The three texts in the above article are very specific: Matt. 12:31, "But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven them." Heb. 6:4-6, "If they shall fall away." Heb. 10:29, "trodden under foot the Son of God...counted the blood of the covenant unholy...done despite to the spirit of grace."

SUBSTITUTES FOR DISCIPLESHIP

In the New Testament salvation and discipleship are so closely related as to be indivisible. They are not identical, but as with Siamese twins they are joined by a tie which can be severed only at the price of death.

Yet they are being severed in evangelical circles today. In the working creed of the average Christian salvation is held to be immediate and automatic, while discipleship is thought to be something optional which the Christian may delay indefinitely or never accept at all.

It is not uncommon to hear Christian workers urging seekers to accept Christ now and leave moral and social questions to be decided later. The notion is that obedience and discipleship are unrelated to salvation. We may be saved by believing a historic fact about Jesus Christ (that He died for our sins and rose again) and applying this to our personal situation. The whole Biblical concept of Lordship and obedience is completely absent from the mind of the seeker. He needs help, and Christ is the very one, even the only one, who can furnish it, so he "takes" Him as his personal Saviour. The idea of His Lordship is completely ignored.

The absence of the concept of discipleship from present-day Christianity leaves a vacuum which we instinctively try to fill with one or another substitute. I name a few.

Pietism. By this I mean an enjoyable feeling of affection for the person of our Lord, which is valued for itself and is wholly unrelated to cross-bearing or the keeping of the commandments of Christ.

It is entirely possible to feel for Jesus an ardent love which is not of the Holy Spirit. Witness the love for the Virgin felt by certain devout souls, a love which in the very nature of things must be purely subjective. The heart is adept at emotional tricks and is entirely capable of falling in love with imaginary objects or romantic religious ideas.

In the confused world of romance young persons are

constantly inquiring how they can tell when they are "in love." They are afraid they may mistake some other sensation for true love and are seeking some trustworthy criterion by which they can judge the quality of their latest emotional fever. Their confusion of course arises from the erroneous notion that love is an enjoyable inward passion, without intellectual or volitional qualities and carrying with it no moral obligations.

Our Lord gave us a rule by which we can test our love for Him: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. . . . If a man love me, he will keep my words. . . . He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings" (John 14:21-24).

These words are too plain to need much interpreting. Proof of love for Christ is simply removed altogether from the realm of the feelings and placed in the realm of practical obedience. I think the rest of the New Testament is in full accord with this.

Another substitute for discipleship is literalism. Our Lord referred to this when He reproached the Pharisees for their habit of tithing mint and anise and cummin while at the same time omitting the weightier matters of the Law such as justice, mercy and faith. Literalism manifests itself among us in many ways, but it can always be identified in that it lives by the letter of the Word while ignoring its spirit. It habitually fails to apprehend the inward meaning of Christ's words, and contents itself with external compliance with the text. If Christ commands baptism, for instance, it finds fulfillment in the act of water baptism, but the radical meaning of the act as explained in Romans 6 is completely overlooked. It reads the Scriptures regularly, contributes consistently to religious work, attends church every Sunday and otherwise carries on the common duties of a Christian; and for this it is to be commended. Its tragic break down is its failure to comprehend the Lordship of Christ, the believer's discipleship, separation from the world and the crucifixion of the

natural man.

Literalism attempts to build a holy temple upon the sandy foundation of the religious self. It will suffer, sacrifice and labor, but it will not die. It is Adam at his pious best, but it has never denied self to take up the cross and follow Christ.

Another substitute for discipleship I would mention (though these do not exhaust the list) is zealous religious activity.

Working for Christ has today been accepted as the ultimate test of godliness among all but a few evangelical Christians. Christ has become a project to be promoted or a cause to be served instead of a Lord to be obeyed. Thousands of mistaken persons seek to do for Christ whatever their fancy suggests should be done, and in whatever way they think best. The what and the how of Christian service can only originate in the sovereign will of our Lord, but the busy beavers among us ignore this fact and think up their own schemes. The result is an army of men who run without being sent and speak without being commanded.

To avoid the snare of an unauthorized substitution I recommend a careful and prayerful study of the Lordship of Christ and the discipleship of the believer.

—Alliance Witness

Selected from Bible Monitor, Dec. 1959

THE VALUE OF THE WORD OF GOD

The Word of God is like Himself, it is perfect. Perfection is claimed by Him for His work, Deut. 32:4, His Word, Psalm 19:7, and His way, Psalm 18:30. It has been given to us, not to criticise, but to obey, and there is special blessing promised to those who hear and keep it, Luke 11:28. We are not to add anything to His Word. Prov. 30:6, because nothing is lacking; nor are we to take anything away, nor deem the least of His commandments to be of little worth, Matt. 5:19; for all, even unto the 'jot and tittle'.

are to be owned and kept, Matt. 5:18.

We must not undervalue any part of these "oracles of God," or think of them as obsolete. Nor dare we take any part with those who would divide these Divine writings into what they call "essentials and non-essentials." For who is there who can sit in judgment on, and apportion to these God-breathed words, comparative values. . . II Tim. 3:16? It is our part to receive all that God has given, to take in these words of God, eating them for inward strength and joy, Jer. 15:16, then go and live them out in daily practice, Psalm 119:105.

We learn the Divine care over the integrity of this Word of God, in the fact, that at the close of each of the great divisions of the Old Testament, the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets—a solemn caution is given not to add to nor take from what God has there given, see Deut. 12:32, Prov. 30:5, 6: Mal. 4:5. And at the close of the Gospels, Epistles, and the Book of the Revelation, we are told, "all things whatsoever" the Lord commanded, Matt. 28:18, all that the apostles taught, Jude, v. 17, and all the words of prophecy given, are to be held intact, nothing to be added to or taken from them. That the warning was needed we know, for there are those now, as of old, who would take from us, or seek to nullify these pure and perfect words of our God. Not many are so bold as to follow the example of King Jehoiakim, Jer. 36:1, 13, and cut out from the inspired pages whatever displeases them. The temptation is rather to qualify the commandment of the Lord, and render void His Word, by arguing, that it does not mean what it says, or to "spiritualize" it in order to get rid of compliance with its demands, and thus excuse ourselves for slighting it. And it is common enough to make "the Word of God of none effect" by reading it through the coloured spectacles of man's tradition. Oh How great is our need in reading the Word of God, to have the spirit of childhood, ready to obey their Father's instructions, not to pick and choose what we shall receive, and what we may reject!

The Lord in His intercessory prayer to the Father for

His own, twice mentions them as those who had "received" and "kept" the words He had given from the Father, and given to them, John 17:8,14. There is no "higher life" than this life of honouring the Word of God, and keeping its commandments. All boasting of devotion apart from obeying God, is vain.

—Words In Season.

THE ISRAEL OF GOD (continued from page 73)

made known unto the sons of men, as it is now (in Paul's time) revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." When Paul says "fellowheirs" and "the same body," and "fellowcitizens with the saints" (chap. 2:19), he cannot be indicating a separate body unrelated to the Old Testament covenants and people. Who else could the "saints" and "heirs" be but the faithful elect members of the commonwealth of the Old Testament Israel who had embraced the faith of Jesus Christ.

Therefore the church is not an exclusive or separate body, but an inclusive body, composed, first, of members of the Old Testament people, to whom the promises were made, and including the Gentiles with them into the same body and fellowheirs with them of the promises which God made to Abraham, but which he first purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began, as the apostle further states in Eph. 3:9-15, "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mysyery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. . . of whom the whole family in heaven and earth are named."

Jacob was named Israel when he was nearly 100 years old, after he had wrestled with the angel at Peniel, and prevailed. His Hebrew name was Jacob; but his title name was Israel (which means A prince of God)

because "as a prince" he had "power with God and with men, and had prevailed." Gen. 32: 28. Therefore all the Old Testament people of God, of whom Jacob was the progenitor, were called Israel. But now all the true children or people of God are begotten not of Jacob, but in Christ who is the true "ISRAEL or Prince of God. Justin Martyr, who wrote about 140 A.D., describes this relationship in beautiful terms when he said, "As therefore Christ is the Israel and the Jacob, even so we, who have been quarried out from the bowels of Christ, are the true Israelitic race."

Those who do not see the union of the sainthood of God in one body, apparently miss the meaning of the symbol of the olive tree in Romans 11. There is only one tree. It was never cut down or grubbed out, nor even were all the branches broken off. Only some of the branches were broken off, and "wild olive branches" (Gentiles) were grafted into the native stock. And then the apostle urges upon them very emphatically, that they are partaking of the "root and fatness" of the tree. For "thou bearest not the root but the root thee." That this tree represents the universal sainthood in Christ Jesus is evident, because "wild" or Gentile branches have been grafted into it. And the standing of both the wild and native branches is by faith (in Christ), because if the native branches, which were broken off, "abide not yet in unbelief" they may be grafted in again. D.F.W.

THE RIGHT TO WORSHIP

If the right to worship should suddenly be taken away we would realize what a tremendous privilege it is. To go to church regularly is not only one of the most important commandments, but a privilege basic to the structure to our society, indicative of the honor of God and the dignity of man. Go to church this Sunday. You may not get what you want, but you will be given what you need: the liberating truth of God.

—Selected, S.F. Examiner

THE CHRISTIAN LORD'S DAY

by John L. Stauffer

(1888-1959)

The Sabbath was the holy day of the Old Testament, sanctified and set apart in commemoration of the creation. It marked the conclusion of the creative week. The Lord's day is the special day for worship in the New Testament and is a weekly memorial or commemoration of the resurrection of Christ, the Head of the new creation. The Sabbath was typical of the rest that we have in Christ. Jesus Christ is now our Sabbath. This truth is clearly stated in the New Testament in Colossians 2:16,17.

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

It would be strange if the New Testament day of worship would not be different from the Old Testament day of worship. In the New Testament we have unfolded to us a number of new things that are distinctive of the later revelation through Christ and His apostles.

We have a NEW COVENANT. The first covenant was faulty, therefore the necessity of a new covenant that would be faultless (Heb. 8:7-8).

We have a BETTER MEDIATOR in the New Covenant than was Moses in the Old Covenant (Heb. 8:6).

We have BETTER BLOOD in connection with the New Covenant than Moses used to dedicate the Old Covenant (Heb. 9:18-26).

We have a BETTER PRIESTHOOD in the New Covenant than Aaron and his sons under the Old Covenant. Every believer is a priest, and Christ is the great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:11).

We have a BETTER LAW in the New Testament. The change in the high priest and the priesthood necessitated a change in the law (Heb. 7:12).

We have a NEW DAY OF WORSHIP, which is consistent with the other new things. Since redemption brings

greater glory to God than creation, it is hence more consistent to worship God on a day that commemorates the new creation through Christ, since He was "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). This is better than to continue to worship God on a day set apart to commemorate creation.

WHY WE WORSHIP ON THE LORD'S DAY

In the first place our Lord declared that he was the "Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). He never enjoined the Sabbath upon anyone in the New Testament and never commanded its observance. None of the apostles enjoined the Old Testament Sabbath observance upon the Christian Church. It is a startling thing to consider such Jewish loyalists as Peter and others of the apostles, and to note how they met together on the first day of the week for worship and the breaking of bread so soon after the resurrection of Christ. There must have been a reason for such a change in them.

In the second place, it must be remembered that our Lord arose on the first day of the week and sanctified that day by His resurrection and His appearances to the apostles. With His death, the Old Covenant came to an end and the New had begun (Heb. 9:17); Matt. 28:1-6; Mark 16:1-2.9; John 20:19).

In the third place, the Apostle Paul distinctly stated that the laws written on tables of stone were done away. This could refer only to the ten commandments (II Cor. 3:6-7; 9:16-17).

In the fourth place, all of the moral principles involved in the ten commandments were reaffirmed in the New Testament except the fourth commandment. This should make it evident to the seeker of truth that the fourth commandment had a typical significance that ended with its fulfillment in Christ (Col. 2:16,17).

In the fifth place, the Apostle Paul was afraid of the influence of those who insisted upon Jewish rites, days, ceremonies, and seasons (Gal. 4:9-11).

In the sixth place, while the records are clear that

Paul used the Sabbath day as an occasion to contact the non-Christian Jews in their synagogues, yet the times of worship, fellowship, and communion with believers is distinctly declared to be the first day of the week:

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7).

In the seventh place, the Apostle John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, which is usually understood to be the first day of the week (Revelation 1:10). The Lord God has certainly rejected the Sabbath Day if it was an eternal law, because Christ arose on the first day of the week, the Holy Spirit was given on the first day of the week, and no recognition is given to the seventh day or to the Jewish Sabbath after the crucifixion by anyone except the non-Christian Jews and the modern Sabbath observers.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

While Sabbatarians are fond of ascribing the change from the Sabbath to the Lord's Day to Constantine in 313, or to one of the popes, they are careful not to quote from the Church Fathers who preceded Constantine. If they did, they could get testimonies in favor of the Lord's Day as the new day of rest and worship for the new dispensation.

Justin Martyr, (A.D. 140) in Dialogue with Trypho the Jew said, "The first day after the Sabbath, remaining the first of all days, is called however, the eighth, according to the number of days of the cycle, and yet remains the first." Cyprian, (A.D. 250), said, "The eighth day, that is the first day after the Sabbath, and the Lord's Day." In the Apostolic Constitutions, about 250 A.D. we have this word: "On the Lord's Day meet more diligently . . . (partaking of) the holy food." Fabian, (A.D. 250) said, "On each Lord's day the oblation of the altar should be made by all men and women in bread and wine." Barnabas, a post-apostolic writer, gave this testimony: "We celebrate the

eight day with joy, on which Jesus rose from the dead, and after, having appeared (to his disciples) ascended to heaven." Ep. C. 15. Younger Pliny wrote to Trajan the emperor (About A.D. 100), "This 'stated day' on which the Christians in Bithynia assembled before daylight to sing hymns to Christ as a God, and to bind themselves by a sacramentum, must be the Lord's day." Irenaeus, (A.D. 178) said, "The mystery of the Lord's resurrection may not be celebrated on any other day than the Lord's Day, and on this alone should we observe the breaking of the paschal fast." Peter, bishop of Alexandria, (A.D. 300) said, "We keep the Lord's day as a day of joy, because of Him who rose thereon."

THE PROPER OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY

The principle of one day in seven for rest is clearly established by the setting apart and the sanctifying of the seventh day in Genesis in connection with the creation. The fourth commandment again verified the principle in Israel that one day should be used for rest, with cessation from secular labor. The principle has been established, even through the specific day called the Sabbath in the Old Testament is no longer required of New Testament Christians.

Inasmuch as grace is so superior to law and the New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant, the present-day Christian should have even a higher regard and respect for the Lord's Day than was held for the Old Testament Sabbath.

No specific rules or laws are given for the proper observance of the Lord's Day. The way in which the Old Testament Sabbath was observed should give the Christian some idea of the respect and regard that should be given to a day commemorating the new creation through Christ.

From the teaching of our Lord concerning the Sabbath (He being under the law until His death), we learn that necessary work was permissible, such as tending cattle, or emergency work like getting the ox out of the ditch, but it was primarily a rest day and a day of worship.

The Christian should likewise consider the Lord's Day as a rest day and a day of worship. Alas, in these days the Lord's Day is too often a holiday instead of a holy day. If Christians do not safeguard the Lord's Day by consistent practice, we certainly cannot expect that anyone else will have a proper regard for it.

There is a work in industry that must be kept going seven days a week, but no spiritually-minded Christian should ever think of choosing such a job for the sake of the dollars involved, thereby robbing God and himself of the day that commemorates the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For the sake of his family also, he should not choose such a job. The Lord's Day provides a needful opportunity for godly parents to teach and train their children in the ways of the Lord.

The Sabbath was also a time of religious activity. The priests and Levites had more sacrifices to offer on the seventh day than on any other. This teaches us that a holy day properly includes Christian activities.

The Lord's Day should be a fast-day rather than a feast-day. It should be a day of worship rather than a holiday. It should be a day for Scripture reading, holy meditation, edifying conversation, and Christian fellowship rather than a day of pleasure and carnal recreation. If every Christian would live on the Lord's Day as he will wish he had lived when he meets the Lord, we are sure that the Lord's Day would in every case be a day of joyous anticipation and spiritual edification.

—The Sword and Trumpet, 1962.

Because of a vague feeling that Christianity does not profit a man materially and is somehow unscientific, CHURCH ATTENDANCE IN EUROPE continues to decline. The theological revival of the 20th Century has had almost no influence upon the apathetic masses. In Denmark less than one half of 1 per cent are active church members. In the Church of England, less than 5 per cent are active. — News clipping

Historical

THE UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE UNDER CONSTANTINE

Constantine found the Church an independent body, a kind of self-constituted commonwealth, which might sometimes be at peace, and sometimes at variance with the civil government, but which was never acknowledged as any part of the whole body politic; it had a separate administration, separate laws, and frequently (through the perversity of its persecutors) separate interests also. The christian, as a citizen of the empire, was subject of course to the universal statutes of the empire—as a member of the Church, he owed a distinct allegiance to the spiritual directors of the Church; and though this allegiance was never inconsistent with his civil obedience, except when that obedience would have deprived him of his religion, it was founded on more commanding motives, and was one from which no earthly authority was sufficient to absolve him. Thus far, and thus far only, his ecclesiastical divided him from his civil duties; to this extent they placed him, at all times, in divergency from the State, and, in times of persecution, in actual opposition to it. And so long as the Church which he honored was disclaimed as a part, or associate, of the State; so long as the space between them was broad and distinguishable, so long the limits of his allegiance to either were very clearly marked. Constantine comprehended the nature, and perceived the inconveniences and the danger, of this disunion; and he therefore employed the earliest exertion of his power and policy to acknowledge the existence, to consolidate the elements, to establish the authority, and to diminish the independence of the Church. To accomplish the first of these three objects, he received that body into strict alliance with the state—to effect the last, he so received it, as to constitute himself its director as well as its guardian, and to combine in his own per-

son the highest ecclesiastical with the highest civil authority. His right to this authority (if he condescended to consider that point) he might drive with some plausibility from the original institutions of Rome. From the earliest ages of its history, the chief magistrate of the nation had been entrusted with the superintendence of the national religion; and it seemed fair that he should impose the same, as the condition of the ESTABLISHMENT of Christianity. And yet a great distinction is to be observed even in this point. For, according to the principles of Polytheism, the most sacred functions of religion might be performed by the hands of the civil magistrates; but the consecration of a separate order to those purposes by the Christian system excluded the Emperor from one administration of the rites of religion; and the Prince and the Priest became henceforward characters wholly distinct, and independent. It was perhaps by this restriction, that the first avowed and legal limitation was imposed upon the authority of the former; and it was not a trifling triumph to have obtained from a Roman Emperor the acknowledgment of any right in a subject, or any restraint upon himself.

Nowwithstanding this assumption of ecclesiastical supremacy by the Emperor, the Church retained in many respects its separate existence, or at least the freedom of its autonomous constitution—indeed, had not this been so, the term Alliance, which is used to designate the union of Church and State under Constantine, as it implies a certain degree of independence in both parties, would be unmeaning and out of place. Some immediate advantages were also reaped by the Church; much that it had formerly held by sufferance, it now possessed by law; many privileges, which had hitherto existed through the connivance only, or the ignorance, of the Government, were now converted into rights, and as such confirmed and perpetuated.

Constantine divided the administration of the Church into 1. Internal, and 2. External.

1. The former continued, as heretofore, in the hands of the Prelates, individually and in Council—

little or no alteration was introduced into this department; and it comprehended nearly every thing which was really tangible and available in the power of the Church before its association with the State, now confirmed to it by that association. The settlement of religious controversies was recommended to the wisdom of the Hierarchy; the forms of Divine worship, the regulation of customary rites and ceremonies, or the institution of new ones, the ordination and offices of the priesthood, which included the unrestrained right of public preaching, and the formidable weapon of spiritual censure were left to the exclusive direction of the Church. The freedom of episcopal election was not violated; and the Bishops retained their power to convoke legislative synods twice a year in every Diocese, uncontrolled by the civil magistrate. We have already mentioned, that, by the Edict of Milan, the possessions of the Church were restored, and it's legal right to them for the first time acknowledged; and this act of justice was followed, in the year 321, by another Edict which permitted all subjects to bequeath property to that Body. Exemption from all civil offices was granted to the whole body of the clergy; and, perhaps, a more important privilege, about the same time conferred on the higher orders, was that of independent jurisdiction, even in capital charges, over their own members: so that the Bishop, alone among the myriads of the subjects of the empire, enjoyed the right of being tried by his Peers. This was not granted, however, with any intention of securing his impunity; for, though degradation was the severest punishment which could be inflicted by a spiritual court; the penalty was liable to increase, after condemnation, by the interference of the secular authority. While we may consider the free trial of the Bishops in a political light, as another important inroad into the pure despotism of the imperial system, we are also assured that on the Body, thus exclusively possessing it, it conferred no inconsiderable advantages. But another privilege, even more valuable than this, and one which

will more constantly be present to us in the history of succeeding ages, is traced with equal certainty to the legislation of Constantine. The arbitration of Bishops in the civil differences referred to them in their diocese was now ratified by law; and their decisions, of which the validity had formerly depended on the consent of the parties, were henceforward enforced by the civil magistrate. On this foundation was imperceptibly established the vast and durable edifice of ecclesiastical jurisdiction; from this simple legalization of an ancient custom, in process of time, the most substantial portion of sacerdotal power proceeded, and the most extravagant pretensions of spiritual ambition. But those consequences convey no reflection on the wisdom of Constantine, since they were produced by circumstances which he could not possibly foresee; and which, besides, never influenced, to any great extent, the eastern division of Christendom.

In the separate view, which we have taken of the internal constitution of the Church, we perceive a powerful, self-regulated body, armed with very ample and extensive authority and supported, when such support was necessary, by the secular arm. Let us proceed to the second division, or the external administration of the Church.

2. Of this department the Emperor assumed the entire control to himself. It comprehended every thing relating to the outward state and discipline of the Church; and was understood to include a certain degree of superintendence over such contests and debates as might arise among the ministers, of whatsoever rank, concerning their possessions, their reputation, their rights and privileges, as well as their political, or other offences against the laws of the Empire. Even the final decision of religious controversies was subjected to the discretion of judges appointed by the Emperor: the same terminated any differences which might arise between the Bishops and people, fixed the limits of the ecclesiastical provinces, took cognizance of the CIVIL causes subsisting between ministers, and lent his power to the execution of the punishment due

to their criminal offences. And though the right of convoking local and provincial synods remained with the Church, that of assembling a General Council was exercised only by the Prince.

—Waddington's History of the Church.

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

The Lord is my Shepherd
We hear David say,
My wants He supplieth
As I journey on my way.
He maketh me lie down
In pastures so green
There to rest from my worries,
From the troubles I have seen.
He leads me by the waters,
Still waters of His love
There I drink when I'm thirsty
And praise Him above.
He restores me the joy
Of salvation I lose,
By sin and transgression
Which so often I choose.
He leads me in paths
Of righteousness here
For His name's sake only
I shall persevere.
Yea, though I walk through
The shadow of death
I will fear no evil
He gives me sweet rest.
Thy rod and Thy staff,
They do comfort when faint;
Through Thy mercy dear Lord,
Thou wilt hear my complaint.
Thou preparest a table
And there I can eat.
In the presence of mine enemies
Who would sign my retreat.
Thou anointest my head
With gladness of oil
My cup runeth over
My garments not soiled.
Surely goodness and mercy
Shall leave me no never,
And I will dwell in the Lord's house
Forever and ever.

Selected by Mary Hitch
Sonora, California

CHARACTERS OF THE BIBLE

RUTH

Ruth was a native of Moab, and became the daughter-in-law of Naomi. Soon after Ruth married Naomi's son he died. Naomi, being a widow too, Ruth became closely attached to her. Naomi begged Ruth to go home to her mother's house, for she felt Ruth would have more opportunities with her own kinsman. But Ruth refused and said, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee from me."

This was an act of love on Ruth's part. Instead of going home to her own family she determined to stay and care for poor aged mother-in-law, for they were very poor and there was a famine in the land of Judah (Naomi's native land).

So they decided to go there to live. Ruth gleaned the harvest fields for a living, and in doing this she found favor in the sight of Boaz (a wealthy man and kinsman of Naomi's husband). Later she married Boaz and bore a son Obed, which was the grandfather of King David.

Kenneth Martin
Nappanee, Indiana

THE PILGRIM

VOL. 9

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER

NOS. 8-9

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

GIVING IN RETURN

As we take from God his blessings—
Air and sunshine, rain and food,
Health and strength, and grace that keeps us
From the low and vile and lewd—
In return we should be giving
Back to Him our best in praise;
Yes, our best in time and service
As we journey through life's days.

For the kindness of our neighbors,
For the prayers that Christians breathe,
For the love that loved ones give us
And the blessedness they wreath
Round about our hearts and spirits,
And our lives on earth's brief shore.
We should in return be giving
Back to them as much—or more.

Giving back our best is blessed—
And for this we all should plan—
When it's rendered full and freely
To our Lord and fellow man;
For we know that in so living
Life is never, never vain
In that heaven is awaiting
With that vast Eternal gain.

—Selected

THE PILGRIM is a religious magazine published monthly by Daniel F. Wolf in the interests of the members of The Old Brethren Church. Subscription rate: \$1.50 per year. Sample copies sent free on request. Address: THE PILGRIM, Rt. 3, Box 1378, Modesto, Calif.

FAITH AND WORKS

Evidently it is very important for Christians to have a correct understanding of the relationship of faith and works to their salvation, for it is expounded and argued in the New Testament, first, by the Lord Jesus himself, and then by the apostles Paul, Peter, James, John and Jude.

There are a number of texts in the New Testament, which, if taken alone without regard to other teaching by the same authors, that would make it appear, on the one hand, that the sinner is wholly passive (has nothing to do) concerning his salvation; and on the other, as if it depended entirely upon his own acts or deeds.

With some thoughtful study of the Bible doctrine on this subject, it is plain that man cannot do any work or deed that could procure salvation for himself, any more than a condemned man in prison can pardon himself. If this were possible, there would have been no need for a Redeemer and an atonement. But there is abundant teaching by the Lord himself and all the New Testament writers that there is an obligation on the part of every believer in Christ Jesus to obey His known will and do works of righteousness, which if ignored or refused would prove a lack of faith and separate him from the Lord and salvation. For Jesus says, "not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." And, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you . . ."

The Gospel announces or proclaims the grace of God to man, and at the same time reveals man's obligation, because of it, to respond and obey its conditions and requirements. This is God's order throughout the whole

revelation of His goodwill toward man. It is always God, and what He has done for man, first, and then man, and what he owes to God because of His Grace.

Thus, faith and works are as related in the spiritual life and salvation of the believer as soul and body are in the natural life. If there were no conditions or obligations of any kind upon man for the gracious gift of salvation, there would have been no need for the Gospel. Man's salvation does not begin with himself and what he begins to do, but with God and what He has already done. For the provision and power and act of salvation is of God. But while this is true, it is also true that God does not save man apart or without his response to what God has already done for him.

This is in perfect harmony with the doctrine of the apostle Paul when he says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast." Eph. 2:8,9. But he says also in Titus 2:11,12 that this same grace which brings salvation, TEACHES us "that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." When this order of God is recognized and kept in mind, there will be no confusion in the mind of any believer regarding the relation of faith and works in his life and salvation.

I once heard a preacher relate how when he urged a certain man to "accept" Christ and the "free gift," he would say, "If only I could do it." He said he would then have to begin all over and explain to him that it is a "gift" and there was "nothing for him to do but receive it. He then illustrated this by taking his watch from his pocket and holding it toward his audience and said, "If I offer you this watch as a gift, all you have to do is to take it. For if it is a gift I would not have a string attached to it to pull it back again."

This same idea was also illustrated in a tract which this same preacher circulated, by representing that a certain beggar came to the door of a prosperous looking home and asked if he could do some work for something

to eat. Whereupon the owner of the house informed him that dinner had just been prepared, and they were sitting down to eat, and invited him to the table also to eat with them. The beggar insisted that he wanted to earn his meal, but was finally prevailed upon to accept it as a free gift and sat down and enjoyed a gracious meal with them without cost or obligation. But after he had eaten and went out to go his way, he passed by the wood pile and stopped and cut some wood to show his appreciation for the goodness of his host.

While these illustrations show some elements of truth, concernig the grace of God and the free gift, the inference drawn from them and its application do not adequately represent the grace of God in the salvation of man. Certainly God justifies (accepts) the ungodly when they believe on him, as Abraham did, before they have "worked" deeds of righteousness. But the Bible nowhere represents that God dispenses the free gift of eternal life

anyone without obligation on their part (or without any "strings attached"). Indeed the strings are the strongest cords possible, which bind the recipient to God and Jesus Christ in such a way that he shares in the death of Christ so that he may also rise with him and walk in newness of life, as witnessed by the whole context of Romans 6, of which verse 21 is the conclusion. "For we are members of his flesh, of his body, and his bones (Eph. 5:30), even as a wife is attached to her husband. It may as well be said that there are no strings attaching a wife to her husband.

In the matter of the beggar who was invited to partake of the free meal, and then of his own accord chose to cut some wood to show his appreciation, it fails to illustrate the true nature of God's claim on the pardoned sinner. How God gives "free meals" to all men alike is shown in Matt. 5:45, where it is said that He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust." But when he takes one into his house to sit at His table, certain obligations ~~and~~ devolve upon him, which He, and not the guest, has ordained; as illustrated in the parable of the wedding feast to which both the good and bad were gathered in

from the hiways and hedges without discrimination or credentials, and brought in to the king's supper free of charge. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. The severity of the sentence passed upon him indicates that he must have known that it was required, and could have been obtained, because he had no excuse.

We do not enter the Father's house and partake of his gracious gifts, and then go on our way as we had been before, and on the way make our own choice of the good deeds we will do to show our appreciation. This would indeed be our own works of righteousness which we have done, and not the works which the Father has ordained that we should walk in them.

The free gift of eternal life is not something that may be detached and given from one person to another. It is an inheritance made possible by first becoming related to God as dear children. His free gift to us includes the surrender of ourselves and service to him permanantly. We enter the Father's house to stay. We no longer roam the hiways. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. Romans 6:16.

When Paul was apprehended on the Damascas road, and said, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" the Lord said, "Go into Damascas, and there it will be told thee what thou must do."

When they cried out with conviction under the preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost and said, "Men and brethren what shall we do?" Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

When the rich young ruler came to Jesus and said, "What good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life, Jesus **told** him what to do, but he refused, and the record says, "He went away sorrowful. The inference is that he did not receive the gift of eternal life which he sought, because he was unwilling to obey the conditions which would have qualified him for it.-D.F.W.

BLINDNESS

By J. I. Cover

Blindness, a severe affliction that many have to bear in this life; some born blind, others by accident or disease enter into the region of darkness.

Blindness, a loss of sight, is far more handicapping than the loss of the use of any of the other senses.

Blindness sent as a punishment came to the people that besieged Lots house in Sodom. Gen. 19:11. The army sent to capture Elisha the prophet, who prayed they be smitten with blindness, and it was so; then Elisha led them blind to Samaria, where their eyes were opened. Read II Kings, 6th chapter. The apostle Paul being made to behold the dazzling heavenly light was blinded until Ananias met him. Acts 9:17. Bar-Jesus who opposed Paul was arrested from his evil work by being blinded for a season. Acts 13:11.

Seven times do we read where Jesus restored sight to the blind, even to one born blind. John 9:1. An outstanding miracle; Jesus completely cured one possessed with a devil who was also blind and dumb. Matt. 12:22. Blind Bartimaeus, the beggar receiving sight, followed Jesus along the dusty highway. Mark 10:46. "Whereas I was blind now I see" the triumphant cry of the one born blind.

Jesus said, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." John 9:39. Some of the Pharisees on hearing this said, "Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them; If ye were blind ye should have no sin: but now ye say 'we see;' therefore your sin remaineth." John 9:40,41.

Handicapping as natural blindness is, yet when the eyes of our understanding are blinded it is a greater calamity that endures, unless the eyes of our understanding be enlightened. Eph. 1:18.

While we walk by faith and not by sight (II Cor. 5:7) yet do we read, "For now we see through a glass darkly

but then face to face." I Cor. 13;12.

How wonderful to have in prospect the glorious time when perfect vision of immortal eyes, blends with divine understanding, and to know as we are known!

Bartimaeus sat long time ago,
Beside the way near Jerico;
A beggar's lot along the road,
And blindness was his heavy load.

Then Jesus Christ passing along,
While multitudes the way throng;
Bartimaeus heard him going by,
For mercy he began to cry.

Have mercy Lord, see my distress!
My blinded way of darkfulness;
Thou Son of David hear me call,
My hope, my light, my way, my all.

Thou beggar now they cry subside,
Turn not the Masters steps aside;
Would he regard thy rags and sham,
And countenance thy lowly name?

Master turn not from me away,
I louder call for thy delay;
A heavy lot I have to bear,
And I am burdened down with care.

The Master hears the cry renewed;
He who with power and love endowed,
Commands that he be called to come,
To him who healed the blind and dumb.

Bartimaeus threw his rags aside,
In Jesus Christ he can confide;
What should I do your load to light?
"Lord that I might receive my sight."

Thy faith saved thee, light away,
Be cured and whole without delay;
He saw the blessed light of day,
"And followed Jesus in the way."

Oh may we know and see aright,
Thy blessed truths be our delight;
Though dark the future, hard the way,
May we behold eternal day.

—Sonora, California

PURE RELIGION

By L. I. Moss

James 1:27. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keep himself unspotted from the world.

It does not take much to defile anything pure. Take a bucket of pure water, just put in a few drops of poison, and it would be dangerous. So it is with pure religion, put a few spots of the world in and it is no longer pure. This verse makes it very clear. We are to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. What are some worldly spots? Some are small, some larger. In our daily life we may do some things which seem so small, but they taint the pure religion. We may just joke or jest a little, but it spoils the pure religion. Eph. 5:4. This may seem a little thing but it does not belong to pure religion.

How careful we ought to be of our words and conduct when among unbelievers.

In our homes we may have things too modern, too much like the world. They become spots of the world, and spoil the pure religion. The cars we drive may be too fancy and make another spot. Oh, it only takes a few little spots to spoil the pure religion. In our attire, there may be some spots as bright colors which are very much in style in the world. We should avoid bright colors, anklets, thin stockings, short sleeves, etc — Any spots of the world. If you want the future church to be pure guard against these things in dressing your children.

Jewelry is another spot that taints the pure religion, rings, wrist watches, ornaments of any kind. These may just be a drop that mars the pure religion. The radio is a thing which has entirely too much worldly activities in it—a black spot to pure religion. The television is worse yet. The pure religion will become very much IMPURE when mixed with these things. Parents will see the effects of these things and wonder

why their children are not interested in the church and Spiritual things.

The text at the head of this article is the inspired word of God. We must accept it as such. There could be many other items named as spots under this text. DO WE WANT A PURE CHURCH? When the Lord comes what kind of people will he take with him? Oh, be ready.

—Bradford, Ohio.

PLAIN WORLDLINESS

Worldliness is a deadly enemy to Christianity. True Christians abhor it like poison. But there are many different kinds of poison and probably just as many different forms of worldliness.

Poison is not always labeled. Carbon monoxide, for instance, is colorless, odorless, tasteless, and invisible. It is a highly poisonous gas produced by the incomplete combustion of any material containing carbon, such as coal, gasoline, etc. When carbon monoxide fumes escape into a room they fill the air with deadly poison, unlabeled and unseen.

If worldliness could always be labeled, the danger would be largely removed. However this is not the case. It is even more subtle than carbon monoxide. Worldliness specializes in hiding behind (and within) noble virtues. Its very existence in the life of a Christian depends on its ability to avoid being recognized.

The guady kind, of course, is more easily detected than plain worldliness, but they stem from the same root. Both are deadly to the soul and destroy spiritual life from within.

The "plain" kind may not show on the outside. But, like a festering pus-pocket beneath the skin, it must be opened and the corruption removed before it can heal. The process of "opening up" is usually more painful than a running sore.

Anything and everything that in any way hinders God

from working in us and through us is downright worldliness, whether we know it or not. It is any secular thing, attitude, emotion, intention, purpose, impulse, or motive that pertains and contributes to this life only. Especially is it worldly if spiritual and eternal interests suffer because of it.

God intends that we eat to live, but living to eat is worldiness no matter how plain we dress. It is Christian to make an honest living, but it is worldly to starve the soul while feeding the body, to strangle one's heavenly life in making an earthly living. It is Christian to help the poor, the homeless, the refugees; but it is worldly to be concerned only about their physical needs when their spiritual needs are even greater.

It is good stewardship to be thrifty and saving; but if one's savings do not help the cause of Christ they become worldly assets. The wide-awake "go-getter" who is not an equally good giver to the work of the Lord is worldly in his life and purpose, in his heart and soul.

If our purpose for farming, carpentering, house-keeping, or any other business is motivated by and contributes to the interests of this life only, we are robbing God of the support we owe to His spiritual interests. If our secular occupation stops short of contributing to the spiritual purpose for which God created and redeemed us, we are certainly missing the mark of our calling in Christ. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." By "much fruit" Jesus meant something more than lots of farm produce. He meant spiritual fruit!

God tests our labors by our motives and purposes, not by our pretenses or accomplishments. The labor of toiling hands is "fruit" for the Lord IF it is done "with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" (Eph. 6:7), and IF the proceeds are used to

His glory. On the other hand, if our motives become self-centered instead of Christ-centered, even church work becomes a worldly pursuit. Worldly motives for doing good take all the godliness out of the act. I Cor. 13:1-3.

We believe in plain clothing, modest homes, and regular church attendance. We want nothing to do with the world's Satan-inspired frivolities and entertainments, such as theaters, beer joints, and carnivals. May God strengthen our convictions against loitering anywhere near those slimy sinkholes of social worldliness!

But that sneaking "carbon monoxide" type of worldliness puts its victims to sleep before they know they have it. One presumes that as long as everything on the outside is in line all must be well within. So thought the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus likened them to whitewashed tombs full of dead men's bones.

Are we ready to open up the secret chambers of our heart and have all our personal motives laid bare? Have we dared to pray that God would search our life and expose every thread of worldliness woven into the inner fiber of our being? Unless we have our hearts "X-rayed" frequently by the search-light of God, we may be infected with worldliness and not even know it.

Worldly motives within sometimes disguise themselves on the surface. The result is wolves in sheep's clothing. It is even possible to dress extremely plain (or even slovenly) just to show off one's "humility". That, indeed, would be plain worldliness. True modesty and simplicity in dress are a credit to Christianity and a glory to God. But slovenliness is neither modesty nor simplicity. It is either a false humility or sheer carelessness by which God is never honored. He is a God of order and therefore cannot be the author of slovenliness.

Worldliness, then, consists of motives (or spirit) as well as in "things", although a liberal show-off of "things", is usually positive evidence of a worldly spirit within. This kind is soon suspected and the

keen observer labels it for what it is. . . .
 —Herold der Wahrheit.

THE STAGE IS BEING SET

"It is later than you think," is no idle saying. We have already over slept. The time of judgment is sweeping toward us. "And that knowing the time, that NOW it is high time to awake out of sleep for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." That which shall strike our poor world as a disastrous storm shall prove to be our salvation (glorification—salvation completed)—if we are ready.

The stage is set by the enemies of God. Communism, Romanism, and Modernism are presently making mighty strides. They are prospering in their way. Even running ahead of schedule. Satan is strengthening their hands. He is set to destroy the people of God from the earth. He is making his final stand before being cast into the pit of fire. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he KNOWETH THAT HE HATH BUT A SHORT TIME." Rev. 12:12.

My heart is heavy indeed as I behold the pharisaical professors of holiness hobnobbing with the world, coveting its smiles, and lusting after its cheap tinsel, and at the same time scorning those of its own company who are yet holding to the old lines of separation. My soul sighs in behalf of the blind religionists who are saying, "I shall never take the mark of the beast. When they start to brand my hand or forehead with 666, I shall refuse." These poor folk are blinded by the devil to the fact that "even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." I John 2:18. In the 15th verse of this same chapter John says, "Love not the world (world order); neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him." This world system is nothing different from the spirit of antichrist. All who fall in line with the customs,

fashions, habits, and spirit of this selfish world are already out of joint with God and are endorsing the antichrist system. The obvious mark of the beast will only be the climax of what they are already accepting.

These deceived religionists who see no harm in this, no harm in that, no harm in anything, are absolutely blinded by the devil. Just because people are nice respectable citizens in this world does not mean that they are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. It is a sad sign when we see that those who claim to be God's people are getting along so well with the world. Jesus didn't, the apostles didn't, our forefathers didn't, nor can we if we are wide awake to follow Christ in reality. "They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

Yes, the people of God are headed for trouble and liquidation so far as it lies within the power of wicked Communism or Catholicism. They have put to death millions elsewhere, and they will do the same for us here—if they have a chance. If Jesus comes for His people before we are plunged into the fires of tribulation, then we will cheat these systems of hell out of their intentions, but if Jesus tarries then we shall witness the fires of martyrdom which millions have known. This is no calamity for God's true people, but shall in effect be their crowning day. Let us sustain no thoughts of sympathy for ourselves concerning that hour of judgment, but let us sincerely pray that God may strengthen us for the subtilities of Satan facing us now. If, by the grace of God, we keep the faith now without yielding in the least to the schemes of the devil, then we shall have nothing to fear. If we flirt with the antichrist system now we shall fall in to the beastly snare as easy prey. Those who allow the marks of the world to be placed upon them now shall have no alternative when the climax comes. Poor deceived friend, if you are persuaded to believe now that the world system is not so bad, and if there is something within you which desires to endorse the system, then it is evident that you are already a part of it,

regardless of what you think to the contrary. You will have no changes to make when the obvious mark of the beast is given. You could not afford to bear the cross and be different when it was comparatively easy to take the way of the Lord, so be sure of this, you will certainly not have the courage to refuse the mark when face to face with death or starvation. By then you will likely be deceived to the extent that you will have no conviction against accepting it, just as you presently have no convictions against doing what you are already doing. How sad indeed it is to hear people who profess to be followers of Christ say, "I have no convictions against doing what I am doing," even though God has spoken to the contrary, and Jesus has said, "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." Multitudes will have no conviction against taking the soul destroying mark of the antichrist, even though such shall seal their eternal destiny.

Believe me, dear reader, all of the modern fuss against standards of separation from the course of the world is more subtle than we know. The question is not so much how long the hair must be, how long the sleeves must be, or what we can see, or what we can't see, where we can go, and where we can't go. The question of all importance is, "Whose side do we want to be on?" If there is something within us which craves to dress like, do like, act like, look like, or be like those who belong to the world order, then we are already in a sad condition. We might even refrain from conforming to the ways of the wicked world, and yet be on the world's side in reality. If we are truly the children of God, then it is settled that we have His nature within us, and the desire for the world is gone. If such is not gone we are still in its snare—regardless of our cheap profession.

Satan and the forces of darkness have set the stage for the final acts of this age. What are we doing as the people of God? Are we setting the stage for our final stand for righteousness, and to be faithful even

unto death? Have we set the stage to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints? Are we prepared to fight to the finish for the faith of our fathers, or shall we, like millions of others, come to terms with the devil? This is that which makes me sigh with grief. If we are faithful we shall soon exchange our sufferings for a sovereign crown, but if we give in a little here and a little there, thus pleasing the devil, we, along with the masses, shall soon be damned world without end. God help us now, and stab us awake before we sleep the sleep of eternal death. "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Rev. 14:9-11. On Whose side are we standing? Whose system are we accepting? Consider. Act now, for "it is later than you think."

— Mission Messenger.

What can strip the seeming beauty
From the idols of the earth?
Not a sense of right or duty,
But a sight of peerless worth.
'Tis the look that melted Peter,
'Tis the face that Stephen saw,
'Tis the heart that wept with Mary
Can alone from idols draw—
Draw and win and fill completely;
Till the cup o'er flows it's brim.
What have we to do with idols
Since we've companied with HIM?

J. G. Hootman
Modesto, California

THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS

Stephen, in his apology as recorded in Acts, speaks of the church in the wilderness. He refers, of course, to Israel wandering between Egypt and Canaan, tormented by hunger and thirst, threatened by serpents and hostile armies, always seeking rest and quiet and never finding it. They were never at home but always on the way.

The French Protestant Huguenots also, in the seventeenth century, like the Waldenses in the centuries before them, called themselves the church in the wilderness. They had to hold their meetings in caves, forests, and desolate places. They dated their baptismal and marriage certificates from "the Wilderness." Their pastors wandered about, constantly changing locations, ever on the alert for spies. For a whole century the French government and the Papacy joined hands in an effort to destroy them.

The Anabaptists likewise developed their movement in the waste places of persecution. Armed executioners sought them out, and killed them without trial. They were overtaken in the woods and mountains where they were hiding, and cruelly put to death. Their property was confiscated. They wandered about "in want, homelessness, and affliction, in mountains and deserts, in holes and caves of the earth. . . . They must flee with their wives and little children from one country to another, from one city to another. They are hated, abused, slandered, and lied about by all men."

Christians under persecution are still realizing that the habitat of the Christian Church is in the wilderness. The story of recent sufferings under communism has not yet been told. We may be sure that there is a thrilling story which can someday be told.

Most of us know nothing of the wilderness of persecution. We live in a day and in a climate of tolerance. The world is willing in our times for the church to settle down and be at home. We are assured that what we thought was wilderness will grow corn and roses.

But let us be assured that the true church will always be the church in the wilderness. It is not a wilderness of beasts and hostile men, but rather the encroachment of Christ-denying ideas and world-loving ease. It is what Lawrence Lepton has called the "neon wilderness." Our civilization and our culture are to-day attempting to smother out the faith which another culture failed to bludgeon to death. And the chances for success are far greater today. Ease may accomplish what rigor could not. The Christian faith flourishes under persecution, but dies where there is no testing. One can call himself a Christian these days without a single experience of difficulty. "A man can live his whole life in this country without finding out whether he is a coward," says one. And that goes for Christians too. The neon wilderness is a place of siren calls to ease and comfort and pleasure.

The point is that a church which is bound for heaven cannot settle down in any earthly wilderness. It dare not make peace with any political order or economic standard or social climate. It dare not identify the Kingdom of God with any Kingdom of Man. It cannot eliminate "I Am a Stranger Here" from its hymnbook. It is false to its character when it becomes fully at home in a world which is essentially at war with God. It never forgets its alien status; its citizenship is in the Eternal Kingdom.

It is difficult to live in the world and not to become identified with the world. There must be constant reminders that we are a church in the wilderness. Persecution helps, but no one would deliberately seek for persecution. In such times as ours there is great need for the teaching which keeps clear the calling and the character of a pilgrim church. Church discipline must keep us aware of true Christian standards. Nonconformed living, which applies rigorously the New Testament ethic, will help to remind us of the difference between the church and the world. And a constant watchfulness for the coming of our Lord, who shall bring to nothing this worldly wilderness and displace

it by the eternal Canaan, will prevent our falling into the complacency and the evil ways of the wilderness dweller.

—Gospel Herald, 1956.

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

A ship was sinking off the coast of Scotland. The lifeboat that went to the rescue took off all the crew but one. Adding him would have sunk the lifeboat. As soon as they got to shore, the captain of the lifeboat asked for volunteers to go back with him to try to rescue the last man. Some of the lifeboat crew were too exhausted to go back. A young fellow stepped forward to go. His mother put her arms around him and said, "Don't go, John. Your father was drowned, your brother William went to sea and never came back. I fear he also is drowned. You're the only one I have left."

John said, "Mother, a man is in peril. I must go to try to rescue him. God will take care of us." The lifeboat was gone a long time. When it finally appeared again, John shouted from the bow of the boat, "We saved the man—and it's brother William!"

This young man risked his life to save an unknown man because he loved his neighbor as himself. And then he had the great joy of finding out that he was saving his own brother!

Let us read our Bibles and pray more. Then our love for God will grow. The more we love God, the more we will love others. —Selected

NOTICE OF LOVEFEAST DATE

The Salida congregation will hold their Autumn Lovefeast at the Salida meeting house, if the Lord will, November 17-18.

The usual invitation is extended to members and friends to attend.

Historical

THE HOLY CITY

1.

From the time of Nehemiah downwards Jerusalem frequently gets this name. "They cast lots to dwell in Jerusalem, THE HOLY CITY" (Neh. 11:1). "The Levites of THE HOLY CITY" were two hundred and eighty-four" (NEH. 2:18). "They call themselves of THE HOLY CITY" (Isa. 48:2). "Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, THE HOLY CITY" (Isa. 52:1). "Seventy weeks are determined on thy HOLY CITY" (Matt. 4:5). "Went into THE HOLY CITY and appeared unto many" (Matt. 27:53). "THE HOLY CITY shall they tread under foot" (Rev. 11:2). There are only two other places in which the words occur, and these refer to the heavenly, not to the earthly city. "I John, saw the HOLY CITY, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven" (Rev. 21:2). "God shall take away his part out of THE HOLY CITY" (Rev. 22:19).

2.

Today, among Mohammedans, it is as El-Kuds or El-Mukaddas, "the sanctuary," "the holy place," that Jerusalem is known throughout the East. When Melchizedek, that strange, remote figure (Gen. 14:19-20), "without father, without mother, without beginning of days or end of life" (Heb. 7:1-3), suddenly flashes across Abraham's path on his return from the slaughter of the kings, it is as "king of righteousness and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace," that he comes, and not only king but also "priest of the God Most High" (El Elyon). The Tel-el-Amarna tablets mention Jerusalem as early as 1400 B.C. as a stronghold of some importance, under a governor who acknowledged the Egyptian king. But there are even earlier associations with a Babylonian supremacy which preceded it. Under the Maccabees the city maintained a fierce independence for a while.

and the Temple was reconstructed; but after one of its many sieges it was captured by the Roman Pompey (65 B.C.) who penetrated unharmed into the Holy of Holies. The year A.D. 70, when the Roman armies under Titus stormed it and destroyed the Temple, ushered in the long era of Gentile domination. So terrible and appalling was the destruction then, which our Saviour had foretold, that Titus--with strange truth from heathen lips--said, "It is not I that have conquered. God, in His wrath against the Jews, has made use of my arm." Jerusalem now became a ROMAN COLONY, designated Aelia Capitolina. No Jew was allowed to approach it under penalty of death; the place was inhabited by foreigners, and a Temple of Jupiter CAPITOLINUS was erected on Mount Moriah. For two thousand years Palestine remained under Gentile domination, for twelve centuries of which Islam held the Holy City. Twice only have Christian forces occupied Jerusalem, the last Christian ruler being Frederick II of Germany, 1229-1244, until the Mandate was granted to Great Britain in 1917.

3.

The Most High has humbled Jerusalem with the severest judgments any city has ever known. It has endured some 28 sieges. Fifteen of these are recorded in the Bible and thirteen in profane history.

1). 1442 B.C. (700 years before Rome was founded) mentioned in Judges 1:8.

2). 960 B.C. By David, mentioned in I Chron. 11:4, 7.

3). 875 B.C. By Chishak, King of Egypt.

4). 794 B.C. By Philistines and Arabians.

5). 739 B.C. By Jehoshaphat, King of Israel, against Amaziah (II Kings 14:13,14).

6). 630 B.C. By Rezin, King of Syria.

7). 603 B.C. By Sennacherib, King of Assyria.

8). 496 B.C. By Nebuchadnezzar. Temple Pillaged. (II Chron. 36:6,7).

9). 489 B.C. By Nebuchadnezzar, second time. Temple again pillaged. (II Chron. 36:10).

- 10). 478 B.C. By Nechadnezzar. City burned (II Chron. 36:17, 20).
 - 11). 320 B.C. By Ptolemy Soter, King of Egypt. 100,000 captives taken.
 - 12). 203 B.C. By Antiochus the Great.
 - 13). 199 B.C. By Scopos, General of Alexander the Great. Greek garrison left in charge.
 - 14). 168 B.C. By Antiochus 4th.
- The following 13 are gathered from profane history:
- 15). 162 B.C. By Antiochus 5th, in the days of Judas Maccabaeus.
 - 16). 135 B.C. By Antiochus 7th, against Hyracanus.
 - 17). 65 B.C. By Hyracanus and Aristobulus.
 - 18). 63 B.C. By Pompey — on the Sabbath Day.
 - 19). 39 B.C. By Herod with a Roman Army.
 - 20). A.D. 70. By Titus, second temple burned.
 - 21). A.D. 135. By Romans against a false Messiah, BarCochebas. (For 200 years the city passed out of history, and no Jew was allowed to approach the city.)
 - 22). A.D. 559. By Chosroes, the Persian, who swept the country.
 - 23). A.D. 636. By Caliph Omar and the Turks.
 - 24). A.D. 1098. By Afdal, Vizier of Egypt.
 - 25). A.D. 1099. By First Army of Crusaders.
 - 26). A.D. 1187. By Saladin The Turk.
 - 27). A.D. 1244. By the Tartar Hordes.
- In A.D. 1917 Jerusalem was delivered over to the Allies without a siege.
- 28). For the last terrible siege see Zech. 14.
- The Midnight Cry.
-

WHY WERE THE MACABEES LEFT OUT?

I have a question which has been asked in our Sunday school class. Why were the Maccabees taken from the Bible? I would like all the information you can give me. —A Pennsylvania reader.

First and Second Maccabees are the thirteenth and

fourteenth books of the Apocrypha, dating from the first and second centuries, B.C. From "The Story of our English Bible," by Walter Scott (Pickering and Inglis, Glasgow), the following is taken:

The Hebrew Bible or Old Testament was completed with Malachi. Then about 284 B.C. the Septuagint or Greek translation of the "Sacred Hebrew Books was begun, and finished about 130 years before Christ. But long after the Old Testament was complete in Hebrew, certain books were written by Jews in Alexandria and elsewhere—dates and names of authors being uncertain—which were bound up with the Septuagint. These books are termed the Apocrypha. They are useful as connecting links of history between the Testaments, but are utterly destitute of Divine authority, nor do the books themselves claim to be inspired. The differences between the Apocrypha and the Hebrew Bible as to character, style, and subjects are patent. . . .

The Apocrypha was first received as canonical by the Council of Trent, 1545, and is highly regarded by Roman Catholics throughout the world.

The following statements are important to remember:

1. No portion of the Apocrypha was written in Hebrew, but all in Greek although by Jews, and never formed part of the Hebrew canon.
2. It was written more than a century after the completion of the Old Testament.
3. It was never regarded by the Jews or their writers as possessing the slightest claim to inspiration.
4. Neither the Lord nor apostles ever cited from, or referred to, the Apocrypha.

With the above agree the statements concerning the Apocrypha made by Ira Maurice Price, D.D., in "The Ancestry of our English Bible" (published in 1906 by the Sunday School Times Company and unfortunately out of print). In conclusion he said: "There are many statements in rabbinical writings that limit the canon to the regular books of the Hebrew Bible, and reject, as did the early Syriac version, every book not contained therein." Selected by a Brother

PONTIUS PILATE (continued from back page)

Be firm, be bold, be strong, be true,
 And dare to stand alone;
 Strive for the right, whate'er ye do,
 Though helpers there be none.

Richard Skiles
 Modesto, California

FAITH

I will not doubt, though all my ships at sea
 Come drifting home with broken masts and sails;
 I will believe the Hand that never fails,
 From seeming evil worketh good for me.
 And though I weep because sails are tattered,
 Still will I cry, while my best hopes lie shattered;
 "I trust in thee."

I will not doubt, though all my prayers return
 Unanswered from the still, white realm above;
 I will believe it is an all-wise Love
 Which has refused these things for which I yearn;
 And though at times I cannot keep from grieving,
 Yet the pure ardor of my fixed believing
 Undimmed shall burn.

I will not doubt, though sorrows fall like rain,
 And troubles swarm like bees about a hive;
 I will believe the heights for which I strive
 Are only reach by anguish and pain;
 And though I groan and writhe beneath my crosses,
 I yet shall see through my severest losses
 The greter gain.

I will not doubt, Well anchored is this faith,
 Like some staunch ship, my soul braves every gale;
 So strong its courage that it will not quail
 To breast the mighty unknown sea of death.
 Oh, may I cry, though body parts with spirit,
 "I do not doubt," so listening worlds may hear it,
 With my last breath.

—Selected

CHARACTERS OF THE BIBLE
PONTIUS PILATE

5th Roman procurator of Judea, Samaria and part of Idumea from 26-36 A.D. Nothing is known of his early life. As procurator in Palestine, he was responsible for the peace of the country, and put down trouble makers with severity. His administration seems to be characterized by corruption, violence, robberies, ill treatment of the people and repeated executions without even the form of a trial. The incident mentioned in Luke 13:1 of the galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with the sacrifices, is not elsewhere referred to, but is quite in keeping with other authentic events of his rule.

The character of Pilate is the concern of this study. In the trial of Jesus, Pilate acted from the standpoint of a functionary for whom public order was more important than the life even of an innocent man. According to Mark, the only question at issue was a confirmation of a sentence passed by the Sanhedrin. Pilate seems to have been convinced of the innocency of Jesus. He would gladly have acquitted Christ and even made serious efforts in that direction, but gave way at once when his position was threatened. His position demanded responsibility. He shunned to accept it, but he was responsible.

We doubt that Pilate is greatly different from men of today. Many of us know the right and are anxious to do it so far as can be done without personal sacrifice of any kind, but yield easily to pressure from those whose interest it is that we should act otherwise. Right and wrong must be absolute attributes, and do not change with social morals. We must find the Right and boldly stand for it. We would like to give Pilate credit for knowing right from wrong; however we also know that whosoever knoweth to do good, or right, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Pilate was finally removed from office after a massacre of Samaritans who were engaged in an innocent religious mission. Of his ultimate fate nothing authentic is known. (Continued on inside of page)

THE PILGRIM

VOL. 9

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER, 1962

NOS. 10-11

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

PSALM 136

O thank the Lord, the Lord of love;
O thank the God, all gods above.
His mercy flows an endless stream,
To all eternity the same.

O thank the mighty King of kings,
Whose arm hath done such wondrous things.
His mercy flows an endless stream,
To all eternity the same.

Whose wisdom gave the heavens their birth,
And on the waters spread the earth.
His mercy flows an endless stream,
To all eternity the same.

Who taught yon glorious lights their way,
The radiant sun to rule the day.
His mercy flows an endless stream,
To all eternity the same.

The moon and stars to rule the night,
With radiance of a milder light.
His mercy flows an endless stream,
To all eternity the same.

Who daily feeds each living thing;
O thank the heaven's Almighty King.
His mercy flows an endless stream,
To all eternity the same.

THE PILGRIM is a religious magazine published monthly by Daniel F. Wolf in the interests of the members of The Old Brethren Church. Subscription rate: \$1.50 per year. Sample copies sent free on request. Address: THE PILGRIM, Rt. 3, Box 1378, Modesto, Calif.

THE STATE OF INNOCENT CHILDREN

The following is adapted from an answer to a brother who writes and asks the question: "Are children that are born of unholy or unrighteous parents, unholy even while in their innocent state (I Cor. 7:14)?"

I have heard considerable discussion on this question by a number of older brethren who are now passed on to eternity. I will venture some thoughts which I think may have some bearing upon it.

This statement was made by the Apostle Paul in connection with some others regarding some specific questions which they had written to him about marriage and celibacy, and, apparently, whether it was lawful for one who was already married to continue to live with an unbelieving companion after he or she had become converted to the Christian faith. For it often happened in that age that one of the parents would be converted and the other not. Apparently it is only this kind of marriage partnership that is under consideration in this text, because of the present condition arising from the gospel being newly propagated among the heathen. He does not appear to have under consideration children of parents who were neither of them in the church, or to be making a general statement of the condition of children before they reach the age of accountability. And so, under these conditions, he is telling them that the unbelieving partner is "sanctified", that is so far as the children are concerned, by the believing partner. And, as I understand it, the children in such cases belong to the congregation or visible body of the Lord and are subject to Christian influence and nurture.

We do not know what he would have said about children of parents who were neither of them in the Lord, if he had written about them. But if both parents were

heathen or strangers to the Lord, then the children would not belong to the congregation or visible body of the Lord, and would not be under the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and consequently would not know the Lord. In this sense, at least, they would be "unholy"—not sanctified or "set apart" to the Lord. Even though the Adamic curse is removed from them by Christ's atonement on the cross and they are perfectly innocent, still they are not in contact with Christian influence and are not made sensible of the goodness of the Lord. If they should die in such a state, at what ever time they come in contact with their Redeemer He will give them LIFE, because they have already been redeemed by the atonement on the cross, and are His, and being yet innocent they have never committed any sin. When therefore they come into the presence of Christ, he will raise them up, as he said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life."

I think it is evident from the Scriptures that the Atonement was for all mankind. See John 3:16; Heb. 2:9; II Cor. 5:14,15, and other similar passages. Titus 2:11 says, "For the grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men. . . ." Thus it appears that Christ's atonement reached to all humanity and saved them from the curse that came upon them because of Adam's sin—or in other words they were all set free from Satan's bondage and restored to the same position which they had before the transgression, in that they were free to choose. I think the deliverance from Egypt is a true pattern of what was done in the Atonement. There is no indication that even one Israelite was left in Egyptian bondage—they were ALL DELIVERED. Before they were delivered they were not free to choose and therefore that responsibility was not put upon them. But after they were DELIVERED they had the responsibility of choosing to obey God. To not obey after they were free to choose, was a committed sin the same as Adam's. "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the Land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels

which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Jude 5,6.

Thus it appears that ALL humanity were redeemed from Satan's bondage by Christ's atonement on the cross, and, being free, they now have the responsibility of choosing a right way of life. And to refuse to acknowledge this gracious sacrifice and work of Jesus on our behalf, and give our lives and service wholly to him in loving obedience, is SIN. To refuse to obey God is a COMMITTED SIN now the same as Adam's sin. Therefore the Scriptures seem to indicate that since the Atonement no one will be condemned because of Adam's sin, but because of their own sin, if they believe not on Jesus Christ who has redeemed them. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Jno. 3:18. "Of sin because they believe not on me." Jno. 16:9. "He that believeth not hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." I Jno. 5:10.

I think that it is at this point where the difference arises between those who believe in "universal restoration" and those who do not. The "universalists" reason that if the Atonement was for all men, then all men must of necessity be saved. But there is a difference between being redeemed or set free from Satan's bondage, and that of finally entering into the promised inheritance, as shown by Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and their subsequent fall in the wilderness. Freedom of choice includes responsibility for the choice made.

It might be likened to a criminal in prison for his crime. While he is under condemnation and in prison he cannot choose another way, but has lost his right of free citizenship. But if he should be pardoned and set free, he immediately becomes responsible again as a free citizen for all his acts and could fall into condemnation again and lose his freedom and also his life. This is what we are told happened to the Israelites who fell in the wilderness. I Cor. 10:1,5; Jude 5,6.

(Continued on page 123)

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?

By J. I. Cover

"For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." James 4:14.

What is your life?; an important question to all of us, as we realize the swift passage of time, that soon carries us to eternity.

Life was given to us in formation of our being, and our conscious awareness of our existence, and our impact or influence on others, is the outward manifestation of our being.

God has revealed to us the account of his handiwork in forming man in the beginning, and being made of the dust of the earth, in the image of God; his crowning accomplishment above all other created beings upon earth.

By breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, man became a living soul; yet he has for his own reasons hidden from man his divinest creation of the soul, the important part of which the spirit of man is partner of that marvelous inner existence that dwells in the body; the house. So man is body, soul and Spirit. Thess. 5:23.

What is your life:, in serious perusal let us consider. True, it is likened unto a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away, denoting our time on earth is brief at best for the oldest person who has ever lived.

But again, though a vapour appears but a short time the vapour cloud of fog is beneficial to vegetation; unless indeed the vapour may be of a poisonour or destructive nature.

Good lives, good influence upon other lives and conditions, having been refreshed and infused by the goodness of God increasing and using the virtues of heaven: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity. II Pet. 1:5-7.

Also the fruit of the Spirit: Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. Gal. 5:22,23.

All of these virtues dwelling in true hearts like vapours of bedewing mist refresh and encourage others; are so beneficial and helpful, so that though our lives may be very short at best it can be a blessing to others, and glory to God.

Then we behold the vapour of smoke of smog, and of various vapour fumes that arise from factory, furnace and burnings; harmful and hurtful to human kind, we realize the deadly parallel of evil passions emanating from the heart of man, defiling and debasing to danger of final corruption, and destruction. II Pet. 2:12.

Who can escape these vile contaminations? Only those who trust in God, and have the assurance of his divine protection and guidance through life.

What is your life? The brevity of life upon earth makes so important we find the answer by deciding to enter the haven of safety in the arms of Jesus, our Living Saviour.—"I will give you rest"—"I give unto them eternal life"—"they shall never perish"—"No man can pluck them out of my hand"—"No man can pluck them out of my Fathers hand." Some of the exceeding great and precious promises, and also we read, "The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Deut. 33:27. We need have no fears of the brevity of life, if we make use of this opportunity to gain the eternal reward,—eternal safety; when the powerful ray beams of the Son of Righteousness will cause all mankind to vanish away to futurity.

What is your life?—a passing shadow,
Flitting accross times earthly meadow;
The sum of rapid moments fleeting,
The space between goodbye and greeting.

What is your life? a time of roving,
Of building, sowing, reaping, loving;
To know the joys of springtime gladness,
To feel the pain of winter sadness.

What is your life? a vapour misting,
The sunlight never long resisting;
Though for a little time appearing.
Soon gone e're shades of night are nearing.

What is your life, in deeper meaning,
What gainfull means of careful gleaning?
For soon the harvest days be closing,
When time may be for calm reposing.

What! is your life an empty dreaming?
A mind with evil motions teeming?
As quick the golden moments flowing;
What is our path where are we going?

What is your life?, an upward toiling,
Temptations power and evil foiling?
Trusting our Lord though days be dreary,
Traveling along though worn and weary.

What is your life without our Saviour?
How could we live far from his favor?
He marked for us the way to heaven;
When for us all his life was given.

What is your life, to life eternal;
Where springtime bliss in regions vernal,
Where death can nevermore bring sorrow,
Safe in the glorious bright tomorrow.

—Sonora, California

INNOCENCE (continued from page 120)

It is possible that we as ministers of the gospel fail to properly impress this truth to those outside of Christ. Too often it may be presented to the sinner in such a way as to impress him that his will be the first act in accomplishing his salvation, instead of the fact that the first and greatest work concerning our salvation is already accomplished by God in Christ "reconciling the world unto himself" which puts the greatest possible obligation upon every soul to acknowledge it and be obedient to its conditions. To refuse to do so is a committed sin.— D.F.W.

SANTA CLAUS AND IDOLATRY

(Editor's Note:—We are publishing this article, not because we think our readers believe in Santa Claus or are teaching their children to believe it, but because it is an excellent treatise on Idolatry, and the methods by which it is propagated and sustained.)

It was doubtless a terrible blow for Satan when the birth of God's Son split the ages and divided time. A new reckoning began and whether man wanted to or not, he must count forward or backward to that point of time when the Babe of Bethlehem came to this earth to bring redemption to man. What a glory and honor to the Saviour to have the world recognize His birth and mission year after year at Christmas time!

And how frustrating this to the fallen Lucifer, who for ages had looked forward to one day changing times and seasons and himself being the center of all earth's worship when he would incarnate himself in the Antichrist, now soon to be revealed. Something must be done to keep Christ from having all this honor annually, and from the ingenuity born of his very nature, Satan challenged the decree and enlisting man's help fought to take from the Lord His place on the throne of Childhood's heart.

What better plan could be devised than to bring in a substitute—and discarding horns and tail, and taking on a jovial face, "Santa" was offered to mankind at Christmas time. We can judge how successfully the plan has worked when we near the Christmas season. Whether we welcome it or not, the face that greets us in all our Christmas festivities is that of Santa Claus. It is difficult to find cards and decorations that do not bear his image. We are greeted with it in shops, in schools, in homes and even in Sunday schools, for he has almost completely taken over the Christmas season.

Who is this usurper? He is the god of Christmas

and good cheer — he is the children's friend. So deeply is he embedded in our sentiments and memories of childhood joy that many hearts thrill to the lines, "Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house, Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse."

And since it is such a charming legend, parents almost force Santa Claus upon their children. Not only do radio broadcasts and whole communities carry on the deception, but even the Pan American Airways cooperate to bring in letters, that have tangible proof of the "old gentleman's" actual existence, and furnish letters from Santa postmarked at his "North Pole" post office in Fairbanks, Alaska.

Could there be intrigue and cunning behind the story of good old Saint Nick — the story that has replaced the sweetest story ever told? You know the legend: Away up north in the ice and snow lives Santa Claus in a house of many rooms, filled with every delightful thing that children love. But wait a minute! Why does Santa live up NORTH?

To the Bible student, the story of the north is a thrilling one and many believe this is the location of God's throne. Relatively speaking, heaven is UP — but in the same sense in which the south pole is spoken of as the bottom. Perhaps the greatest reason for believing God's dwelling is in the north is a clue we take from the challenge of the rebel himself when he said in Isaiah 14:13, "I will ascend into heaven. I will sit upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north. . . ." In Psalms 75:6 we read, "Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south." The Psalmist hastens to tell us that it comes from God — and he leaves only one point of the compass from which promotion can come; i.e., the north. In Job 26:7 we have the interesting observation, "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." It is a fact that astronomers locate an apparently empty space in the region of the north star. Anywhere else that the telescope is trained they tell us there are stars, stars

and more stars, stretching away to distances of millions of light years. But there is one spot in the starry heavens where no stars seem to appear — only an empty place with a luminous glow. It does seem evident that God's Word attaches special significance to the North, and Christians want to remember this sweet mystery God calls to our attention. With what indignation then do we see a usurper, repulsive and ugly "expected" from the north year after year. Satan knows God's pattern of things, and if man lets him, he usurps every part of the blueprints as they pertain to the human family. We can refuse to let him!

But on with the legend. Santa is all seeing and all knowing: "He sees all you do, he hears all you say. . . ." So the children sing, and so they are led to believe. How close does he dare come in his impersonation and Christians not detect him? Satan is not omniscient, nor is this god that he presents in his place all knowing! But our Lord Jesus is! "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. For there is not a word in my tongue but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." Psalms 139:1-4.

Moreover, the children are taught that Santa keeps a book of remembrance in which he records all their words and actions. Why does Satan — Santa want this thought of himself? Because he has always wanted to take the Lord's place. Malachi 3:16 tells us, "And the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name." It will be a fearful day when the book is opened. Satan does not care for the children to be taught about this, but how he must delight to slip into the place of our blessed Lord here, too.

So what happens? Santa comes down from the sky in a sleigh — the nearest thing to his flying saucer that man could understand when this lie was first thrust upon us. Drawn by swift reindeer that "fly upon the wings of the wind and ride upon the clouds."

They say you compliment another person when you imitate him. Satan knows how wonderful God's ways are, and he takes the role of being God's ape. David tells us of God, "Who maketh the clouds his chariots."

Do I fancy the deceiver chuckling as the "charming story" continues? For when this imposter comes he has his chariot filled with wonderful gifts and he brings "rewards" to all good children and the gifts they have asked of him! Ah, how well he knows, and how determined he is that men shall forget that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." He is the deceiver, and America, the Christian nation, prefers to have her children thank Santa Claus for gifts rather than the Father above.

His coming is secret! Only those who watch and wait can ever see him. And where does Satan get this idea? It is in such a manner that our Lord will come again from heaven. "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Matt. 25:13. And when HE comes, His rewards will be with Him!

And what is the children's reaction to the legend? Santa Claus is their friend. He has all the good things they want and he will give to them if they are good. Is it any wonder that they open their hearts to him and make petitions to him, striving to please Santa Claus, talking and dreaming about him, and watching and longing for his coming? (The latest is writing a letter to Khrushchev to please not bomb the north pole lest he hurt Santa Claus!) AND WHAT ABOUT JESUS WHO SAID, "SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME?"

America has put before her children that awful thing against which Sinai thundered. We have put another god before Him. But of course we do not worship Santa, someone says; he is merely a SYMBOL OF CHRISTMAS. A symbol of what — of the Babe of Bethlehem? You who claim that this is an innocent fantasy — a harmless and interesting tradition, answer honestly one question: whose place has this usurper taken in the hearts of children, and whose workmanship is he? Strip him and you will find him to be the very masterpiece of Satanic subtlety. STRIP HIM, remembering that the thing Satan has desired from the time of his rebellion is worship.

So great is his ambition in this line that he tried to get Jesus to worship him while He was on earth. The enormity of this is often lost upon us, but we would be enlightened if we realized that the once beautiful and exalted Lucifer is hungry for worship. He gets it wherever he can, even if he has to hide behind something to secure his desire. The Word speaks of his wiles in this respect.

In pagan countries much of the worship given Satan and demons is in the open, for the heathen know about spirits of wickedness and direct their worship to them in efforts to appease. We in so-called Christian lands almost never catch the true impact of this, failing to understand that worship of idols is not worship given to images themselves but directed to the spirits behind the images.

Go to an idol shop where images of all sizes and kinds are for sale and watch the heathen as he selects a god. But the wooden, stone or paper doll he buys is not his god — it must first be taken to the priest to have eyes painted in it. Then the spirit to whom it is dedicated takes its abode and all too commonly supernatural power is connected with the worship that follows.

The Roman Catholic feels we do not understand his use of images. He wearies of telling us he does not actually worship the picture or image — these are just reminders of the things he worships! And their images also must be put into the hands of the priest, and "blessed" with incantations said over them before they become representations of the spirits behind them. We must understand this or we do not understand idolatry. And calling the idol by names the heathen use, or giving them Bible names does not affect the worship. The benign "Queen of heaven" worshipped by the Chinese (and in Old Testament times) is the same idol even when it is given the name of the virgin Mary, and the power behind the image is the same whatever name it is given.

Christians often fail to understand the idolatry of the Old Testament. How could they turn from the worship of the true God and turn to

worship a golden calf! But the Israelites were not worshipping the calf AS A CALF; they had made it to represent the true God, the God who had brought them out of Egypt. They never believed that this image had brought them out of bondage — they were worshipping the God who had done so, but they wanted something to look at to represent Him, and in this case they made a calf to be that representation. So the heathen today, and so the Roman Catholic worship the thing the image represents. AND THIS IS IDOLATRY; this is the thing which God condemns!

For the point is that even if His own acts and miracles are attributed to it, or names from the Bible are given it, our God refuses to identify Himself with any image — while Satan grasps at every opportunity to do so. Paul explains this clearly: "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things; and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." I Cor. 8:4. "What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered to idols is anything? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils (demons), and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." I Cor. 10:19, 20.

We see hideous gods worshipped by the heathen, and we shudder, wondering why they make them so vicious and repulsive. What many do not realize is that every idol has a demon whom it represents, and every demon is a personality. When a demon possesses a human being, the human personality become superimposed by the personality of the demon. A demon cast out of one person may enter a second, and it is startling to see the second person begin to resemble the one in whom the demon previously dwelt. Speaking of idols Psalms 115:8 says, "They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them." This is not referring to a mere image of wood or stone, but the power to change the personality

of the worshipper comes from the power behind the god.

So far America's background and respect for the Word of God and her knowledge of that Word has kept the ugly, vicious, repulsive demons from openly manifesting themselves. (When they do, they may have their "houses" locked up in a mental institute.) But times are changing, as America loses knowledge of the teachings of God's Word. She no longer recognizes demon possession as taught in the Bible, and which our founding fathers dealt with strictly as bidden in the Word, thus keeping Satan's power checked. Only the more "respectable" demons — demons of pride, lying demons, religious demons, etc., were able to stay in power, and these because they are not by nature ugly and repulsive to civilized people have been able to carry on their work unhindered. But today America has let down the bars and is allowing hordes of demons that have long ruled pagan countries to take over.

We speak of dual personalities (and even the three faces of Eve) as a NOVELTY, and look to a psychologist to explain the PHENOMENA to us — as though we have never read the Bible with its clear teaching of demon possession! More and more testimonies are given in court by criminals guilty of sadistic acts, "I don't know what made me do it — some power compelled me. . . ." And while vicious, sordid ugly demons openly flaunt their powers in our land, they get by unrecognized while psychologists and psychiatrists reason with their own human thoughts and ministers of the gospel stand by seemingly helpless.

Let us begin to line up with the teaching of the Word about idolatry and demon powers. Let us throw out the idol that for years has been given such prestige during the sacred Christmas season! Clouds of judgment hang heavy over the homes of America. Terrible things are happening to our children. Let us hasten to enthrone Jesus in our homes, telling our children the matchless story of God's unspeakable gift to the world. Let us throw out the vulgar Santa Claus with his "nose like a cherry, and his little round belly that shakes like a bowl full of jelly," and let us captivate

our children's imagination with the altogether lovely one — with the story of the Christ child, of the guiding star, the wise men and the shepherds! Let us inspire our children to give gifts to Him and in His name, and let us teach them to look for Him to come again. Christmas can be holy ground in our homes as we remember the solemn injunction of the Word of God, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

—The Midnight Cry, January, 1962.

ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED

Some people say so. In fact, they claim Rom. 8:35-39 as one of their key passages. They also lay special claim to John 10:28 and 29. And at first glance, these two sets of verses do rather seem to imply that one can never get separated from Christ.

However, there are other New Testament passages which we must also consider on this subject. One of them is II Pet. 2:20-22: "For if after men have escaped the corrupting ways of the world through a full knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they again become entangled in them and are conquered by them their last condition is worse than their former one. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of uprightness than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command committed to their trust. In them is verified the truth of the proverb, 'a dog turns back to what he has vomited up'; and of that other proverb, 'A sow that has washed herself goes back to wallow in the mire'" (Williams).

A second is found in I Tim. 1:19,20: "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." Two others are I Cor. 9:27 and Heb. 6:4-6. All of these references from II Peter, I Timothy, I Corinthians,

and Hebrews, either directly state or clearly imply that one can fall away and be lost after having been saved.

Furthermore, the doctrine of "once saved, ALWAYS saved," does not square with the terrible urgency and concern with which Paul wrote to the Galatians, after he had heard that they were turning away from Christ. If it's a matter of "once saved, always saved," why did he need to be in such a sweat over the thing? Why couldn't he have written a much milder, more confident letter to them? In fact, why, in that case, did he need to write at all?

We might also raise the issue of Solomon and Judas. Didn't they fall away? The answer of our "eternal security" brethren that no one in such a case had ever been saved in the first place, somehow fails to convince. It may be clever argumentation, but it's not necessarily common sense, for Solomon was once humble and close to God, and Judas along with the remainder of the Twelve, had gone out preaching and casting out devils. Then we may also point out that the "once saved, ALWAYS saved" idea is contrary to even present-day human experience. ALL of us know (or have heard of cases) of men who have turned their back on Christ and their former experience, and who walk with Him no more. We may sum up by saying that the weight of Bible teaching, and also the testimony of human experience is against the idea of "eternal security."

What then IS the teaching of John 10 and Romans 8? Simply this: Jesus gives us eternal life, and we shall never perish, if we do our part to maintain the spiritual relationship which He has made possible. And when we do our part to keep this relationship vital, then no man, influence demonic, nor force of persecution will be able to separate us from Him.

- Herald Youth Bible Studies

Selected from the Gospel Herald, 1958

IN THE NEWS

SOME SERIOUS DISSENTS ON CHRISTIAN UNITY PROPOSALS

"This church unity movement sounds like a wonderful idea," writes a woman in Bakersfield. "But there are many Christians who look upon it as a fearful thing."

She's right. And its time these dissenters had their day in court.

The case for reuniting the Christian family has been stated often and eloquently in recent years by leaders of the Roman Catholic Church and major Protestant communions. Some folks have gotten the idea that no one is against unity except a few bigots and hate-mongers.

EVANGELICAL VIEWS

But that is not true. There are millions of sincere people, particularly in the fundamentalist or evangelical wing of Protestantism, who oppose the church unity movement because they regard it as a threat to religious freedom and sound doctrine.

Doctor George L. Ford, executive director of the National Association of Evangelicals, said that religious freedom "demands diversity." Denominational divisions, instead of being "evil" may safeguard the right of free people to think differently about religion.

Fear of a "monolithic" church also was voiced by the Reverend Harold J. Ockenga, pastor of the Park Street Church in Boston.

UNITY ON LESS

Dean Merrill C. Tenney of Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill., warned that "we shall get to the point where we are united more and more on less and less until finally we have tremendous unity on nothing."

The Reverend James DeForest Murch, of Washington, D.C., chairman of the Evangelical Action Commission of the National Association of Evangelicals, said the unity movement "is good insofar as it is a reaction against sectarian bigotry, intolerance, pride and exclusiveness."

ANOTHER FEAR

Doctor Stephen W. Paine, president of Houghton College, Houghton, N.Y., underscored another fear which troubles Evangelicals—that the unity movement will lead to "a growing centralization of ecclesiastical power, with a corresponding decline in the importance and the freedom of the individual church member."

Mrs. Ailene Nelson, of Bakersfield, whose letter started all this, summed up the evangelical case against unity as forcefully as any of the noted clergymen:

"Religious freedom is too precious to sacrifice on the alter of church unity. In order to come to church unity, I'm sure it will be the smaller denominations that will have to give up their doctrines."

—In the daily Stockton Record

LBJ HAS LONG AUDIENCE, 41 MINUTES, WITH POPE

VATICAN CITY—United States Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson called on Pope John XXIII today and afterward predicted great economic and social advances will result from the forthcoming Roman Catholic world-wide council.

Johnson, on the final day of his six nation, 15 day goodwill tour around the Mediterranean, spent 41 minutes alone with the 80 year old ruler of the Roman Catholic Church. Johnson called the discussion of world problems "inspiring and very optimistic." . . .

BOTH ENJOY MEETING

Only 20 minutes had been set aside on Johnson's program for the audience. It was clear Johnson and the Pope enjoyed their meeting.

"I had the great honor and privilege to be in the presence of His Holiness, and his wisdom and his knowledge, which is so extensive. I was listening and learning," Johnson said later.

"I was stimulated by the spiritual leadership I have just observed."

Referring to the worldwide Roman Catholic meeting opening in St. Peter's on October 11th, Johnson said:

"From that meeting will flow great advances in the economic and social field."

From the Pope's library, the Johnsons paid the usual call at the offices of the Vatican Secretariat of State.

—The Modesto Bee, Sept. 7, 1962

"... With whom the kings (rulers) of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." Rev. 17:2. — Editor

THOUGHTS

If we could see beyond this life's short journey
And catch a glimpse of Heavenly wonders fair,
If we could see beyond the pearly gateways,
The many, many mansions waiting there;
If we could hear the heavenly choirs
For but a moment, rising full and free
And hear the chants of four and twenty elders
Around the Throne of Majesty;
Would we still be content to roam earth's pathways
E'en though our own be blest with pleasures fair?
How poor would seem the best this life can offer
Compared to joys awaiting there.

Perhaps 'tis best we cannot see the mansions
As long as we have work on earth to do;
God placed us here—may we accept the challenge—
What e'er our lot, the Lord will see us through.
May we perform our tasks, however humble,
From this life's dawn until its setting sun,
Then, when we've reached the end of our journey
We'll know a glorious life has just begun.

—Elsie Nighswander

Selected by Annie Baker, Maple, Ontario

Historical

THE EFFECTS OF CONSTANTINE'S INTERVENTION IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE CHURCH

We should not omit to mention some changes at that time introduced into the titles and gradations of the Hierarchy, in order to associate their administration more intimately with that of the civil officers. To the three Prelates of Rome, Antioch and Alexandria, who enjoyed a certain degree of preeminence in the Church, was added the Patriarch of Constantinople—these four corresponded with the four Praetorian Prefects then also created. After these followed the Exarchs, who had the inspection over several provinces, and answered to the appointment of certain civil officers of the same name. The Metropolitans had the government of one province only, and under them were the Archbishops, whose inspection was confined to certain districts. The Bishops were the lowest in this gradation, but many of them possessed ample extent of authority and jurisdiction. Their number at this time was one thousand eight hundred, of whom a thousand administered the Eastern, eight hundred the Western Church. In this whole Body, the Bishop of Rome possessed a certain indeterminate precedence, or preeminence, unattended by any authority; and this precedence is attributed, first, to the Imperial name of Rome, and next to the superiority in wealth, which he seems to have acquired at a very early period; to the splendor and extent of his religious administration, and the influence naturally rising from these causes.

The simple establishment of the Church, such as we have now described it without anticipating the measures of State afterwards applied, or misapplied, to the support of it, was favorable not only to the progress of Christianity, but also to the concord of Christians; the former has never been disputed; as to the latter, we have seen by what a cloud of heresies the religion

was overshadowed before its establishment; and no one can reasonably doubt, that the additional sanction given to the gospel by imperial adoption, and the greater dignity and influence and actual power thus acquired by its regular ministers in every province of the Empire, would conduce to dissolve and disperse them. They did so—but while the numerous forms of error, of which we have treated, fell for the most part into silence and disrepute, there was one, of which we have yet made no mention, which grew up into such vigor and attained so much consistency, that there seemed to be danger lest it should possess itself of the high places, and occupy the sanctuary itself. Its progress, and the means adopted to oppose it, form the subject of the following chapter. We shall conclude the present with one or two observations.

It is one favorite opinion of most skeptical writers, that Christianity is entirely indebted for its general propagation and stability to the Imperial patronage of Constantine. It is another, that the establishment of the Church led to the disunion of its members, and its prosperity to its corruption. The first of those theories is falsified by the history of the three first centuries—during which we observe the religion to have been gradually but rapidly progressive throughout the whole extent of the Roman Empire, in spite of the persecution of some Emperors, the suspicious jealousy of others, and the indifference of the rest. We need not dwell longer on this fact; especially as it is virtually admitted by those same writers when it suits them to attribute Constantine's PRETENDED conversion to his policy. The second of their assertions has a greater show of truth, but is, in fact, almost equally erroneous. A fairer view of that question, and, if we mistake not, the correct view, is the following—the ESTABLISHMENT of the Church was in itself highly beneficial both to the progress of religion, and to the happiness of society—the mere pacific alliance of that Body with the State was fraught with advantage to the whole Empire, with danger to no member of it. Many evils indeed did follow it, and many vexations were

inflicted by Christians upon each other in the perverse zeal of religious controversy. But such controversies as we have sufficiently shown, had existed in very great abundance, very long before Christianity was recognised by law; and the vexations were not at all the necessary consequence of that recognition. They originated, not in the system itself, but in the blindness of those who administered it; they proceeded from the fallacious supposition—that which afterwards animated the Romish Church, and which has misled despots and bigots in every age—that unanimity in religious belief and practice was a thing attainable; and they were conducted on a notion equally remote from reason, that such unanimity, or even the appearance of it, could be attained by force. Many ages of bitter experience have been necessary to prove the absurdity of these notions, and the fruitless wickedness of the measures proceeding from them. But a candid inquirer will admit that they were not at all inseparably connected with the establishment of the Church; and that that Body would not only have continued to exist and to flourish, without any interference of civil authority to crush its adversaries, but that it would have subsisted in that condition with more dignity, and more honor and much more security.

The prosperity of the Church was unquestionably followed by an increase in the number and rankness of its corruptions. But unhappily we have already had occasion to observe, that several abuses had taken root in all its departments, during at least that century which immediately preceded the reign of Constantine—to the fourth we may undoubtedly assign the extravagant honors paid to Martyrs, and the shameful superstitions which arose from them. But we should also recollect, that many among the Romish corruptions are of a much later date, and that several may be directly referred to the influence of expiring Paganism, not to the gratuitous invention of a wealthy and degenerate priesthood. Indeed, we should add, that in respect to the moral character of the clergy of the fourth century, they seem rather chargeable with the narrow,

contentious, sectarian spirit, which was encouraged and inflamed by the capricious interference of the civil power, than with any flagrant deficiency in piety and sanctity of life. (Euseb. H.E. lib. vii, c.i.)

—Waddington's History of the Church

(STEPHEN — continued from back page.)

spite of Stephen's testimony of his vision into heaven, they took him out of Jerusalem and stoned him as he called on God. His last words were a prayer that God "lay not this sin to their charge."

As we study the character of Stephen we see that he was a close follower and imitator of Christ Jesus and was treated similarly. The record says that he was full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. It is no wonder that he could speak with power and work miracles. We see that Stephen was well educated in the scriptures and was able to use them to reason with his people. An outstanding characteristic was his fearlessness in speaking out—even at the danger of his life. Finally, I would like to mention Stephen's forgiveness of his persecutors. In this age we are quick to demand fair treatment, and we resent even slight injustices against us. But Stephen followed the example of Jesus and prayed for the Lord to forgive his murderers even as the stones were beating on his broken body. As Stephen compared his glorious vision into heaven with the scene around him, no doubt he also felt pity for those who would not accept the Gospel of Salvation.

I feel that we can learn these lessons and perhaps others from the life of Stephen:

1. Be willing to serve whether it be serving tables or speaking out for the Lord.

2. Don't be afraid to speak for Christ though you may have tough opposition.

3. Be versed in God's Word. No human reasoning can be as effective as God's Word.

4. Don't be afraid to speak against sin.

5. Be ready to sacrifice all if it is required for a Christian witness.

6. Be willing to forgive as God has forgiven us.

—Leslie Cover

CHARACTERS OF THE BIBLE

STEPHEN

The first Christian martyr, Stephen, lived when the church was still quite young. During his short ministry "the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly." He is first mentioned as "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost" who was chosen with six others, to oversee the daily ministration. This was to free the apostles for constant prayer and ministry of the word. They were chosen by the whole multitude and given their ministry by the laying on of the apostles' hands. This work was partly serving tables and distributing food. But it must also have included spiritual ministration and instruction from house to house among the new Christians. It is recorded that Stephen did great wonders and miracles among the people. He soon met opposition and found himself the center of a dispute with several sects of the synagogue. Stephen was more than a match for them, and they could not resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke. As they did with Jesus, they set up false witnesses to testify against him on the charge of blasphemy. As he was tried in the council, his face appeared as the face of an angel to those who saw him.

His defense at this trial was a vivid account of the history of his nation from the call of Abraham to the building of the temple by Solomon. It shows Stephen's insight into the problems of his people down through the years and seems to be a protest to the charge that he was a blasphemer against the law. In his reference to the building of the temple, he reminded them that God does not dwell in temples made with hands. He accused them of resisting the Holy Ghost in their lives which is God's real way to dwell with men. He accused them of the betrayal and murder of Jesus and all the sins of their fathers. This was too much for those self-righteous people. They were cut to the heart. In

THE PILGRIM

VOL. 9

DECEMBER, 1962

NO. 12

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning,
Joy to the lands that in darkness have lain!
Hushed be the accents of sorrow and mourning,
Zion in triumph begins her mild reign.

Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning,
Long by the prophets of Israel foretold;
Hail to the millions from bondage returning,
Gentiles and Jews the blest vision behold.

Lo, in the desert rich flowers are springing,
Streams ever copious are gliding along;
Loud from the mountain-tops echoes are ringing,
Wastes rise in verdure and mingle in song.

See, from all lands, from the isles of the ocean,
Praise to Jehovah ascending on high;
Fall'n are the engines of war and commotion,
Shouts of salvation are rending the sky.

Thomas Hastings, 1832

THE PILGRIM is a religious magazine published monthly by Daniel F. Wolf in the interests of the members of The Old Brethren Church. Subscription rate: \$1.50 per year. Sample copies sent free on request. Address: THE PILGRIM, Rt. 3, Box 1378, Modesto, Calif.

THE THRONE AND DYNASTY OF DAVID

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

. . . The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. Luke 1:31,35.

From this text we may learn that Jesus, the son of Mary, who was born of the family of David, was more than a carnal son, for he was also the Son of God. And the "throne of David" was more than a temporal earthly throne, because it is of endless duration.

The Lord promised such a throne and kingdom to the family of David on the occasion as recorded in II Samuel 7. And it is evident that the "house" and "throne" and "kingdom", of which he spoke at that time, far transcended that of his son Solomon and the temple which he was to build. Without doubt it was the same throne and kingdom of which the angel spake to Mary, because verse 16 says, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." I Chron. 7:16.

David himself was well aware that the throne and kingdom which he occupied was the Lord's and acknowledged it in many of his Psalms and prayers: Psalm 45:6 says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter."

In his old age, before his death, when David was committing the kingdom to his son Solomon, he blessed the Lord before all the congregation of Israel and said, "Thine O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty, for

all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted above all. I Chron. 29:11. "Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father. I Chron. 29:22.

It will be remembered that when Israel asked for a king, in the days of Samuel the prophet, they committed a great sin. The Lord said to Samuel, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. Perhaps the key to their sin is revealed in their request of Samuel to "make us a king to judge us like all the nations." "When the Lord their God was their king."

In Matt. 25, it is revealed by our Lord that when he comes to earth again, he will sit upon the throne of his glory, and there will be a great separation of all nations that are gathered before him. Then he will say to those on his right hand, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

In the light of this revelation, we can see more clearly why it was so great a sin for them to ask for a king "like all the nations." Because the kingdom was already "prepared from the foundation of the world," and the Lord their God was their king. This, no doubt, was part of the "Eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. . . from the beginning of the world" (Eph. 3:9-15), and of that revealed by the apostle Paul in Titus 1:2, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

We believe that the eternal throne and kingdom, promised to the dynasty of David (II Samuel 7:16), the "everlasting kingdom" shown to Daniel in various images and visions, and the "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" which John the Baptist, and Jesus and the apostles preached, in the New Testament, are all one and the same kingdom, determined and prepared of God, in Christ Jesus, from the foundation of the world. It has passed, and is passing, through various condit-

ions and stages of development in relation to its subjects on earth, but in the mind and purposes of God, it is one and the same kingdom through out all time and eternity.

We cannot believe that when Jesus said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world," he had reference only to the future kingdom. Pilate asked him, "Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness of the truth. . . ." The truth was that he was born a king of a kingdom that is not of this world, but which was before this world—and is yet to come, when he will be king over all the earth. Zech. 14:9; Rev. 19:6, 16.

It is clearly evident, from the history of the Old Testament kingdom of Israel, and during the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ—and even to the present time, that the Jews (including the disciples of Jesus, before they were converted) failed to understand that the "kingdom" which God promised to the dynasty of David, was not an earthly temporal kingdom, but was of heavenly origin, with a heavenly king. This was probably largely because they failed to understand the meaning of the Old Testament prophecies that Christ, the son of David, and king of Israel, was also the SON OF GOD.

In one of the final encounters which Jesus had with the unbelieving rulers, shortly before his crucifixion, he asked them, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word. . . ." The meaning of this prophecy in the Psalms is now clear to us, but it was obscure to them because of their unbelief. In the Rev. Jesus says, "I am the root and the offspring of David," which shows that Christ was both antecedent and successive to David. Again the prophecy of Micah (5:2) reveals this same truth: "And thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though

thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Considering the fact that it was so great a sin for Israel to ask for a king in the days of Samuel, and the immediate departure of the kingdom of Israel from the dynasty of David under Rehoboam, his grandson, and the subsequent decline of the kingdom of Judah under their successive kings, until they were finally carried away into Babylon, the evidence strongly indicates that it never was God's purpose and plan for Israel to have a temporal earthly kingdom; nor that the carnal dynasty of David should continue for any great length of time.

Zedekiah was the last king of the carnal seed of David to sit upon his throne. And of him the prophet Ezekiel (who was contemporary with him) says, "And thou, profane (worldly) prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; . . . I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." Ezk. 21:25-27.

Thus ceased the kings of Israel. And the dynasty or "tabernacle" of David lay in ruins from that time until Christ (whose right it is) was born. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." Isa. 11:6,7.

Therefore the throne and kingdom which God gave to David, both antedates and succeeds the Old Testament kingdom of Israel over which he ruled.

They were the chosen people through which the kingdom of God was manifested to the nations on earth in their time. But their apparent exclusive rights to it was

(continued on page 153)

THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO
SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST.

By Elder John Kline

If man could fairly realize what he has lost through sin; and what may be gained by forsaking all for Christ; in other words, what it is to be lost, and what it is to be saved, he could not rest satisfied to remain one moment longer in his sin-ruined state. Like the Philippian jailer, he would instantly cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" Like the people on the day of Pentecost, being pierced as to their hearts by what they heard and saw, he would say: "Brethren, what shall I do?" "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost." It is of the utmost importance to know what was lost, so as to know what it is that the Son of man came to save. I will try to tell you this. It is you, it is I, it is every human being upon the face of the earth. And are all lost? Yes, without an exception. To what extent are we all lost? To the extent of all that is of us—body, spirit and soul. And are our bodies lost? Yes, our bodies are lost to all that God intended them to be. Our bodies were never designed to be the abodes of disease and suffering; neither were they intended to be subject to infirmity from age. When God looked down upon a finished creation he saw that it was good, yea, very good. Can this be said of our bodies now? Let the blind, the deaf, the lame, the countless sufferers on beds of affliction, the child-bearing mother, the decrepit consumptive, the rheumatic invalid, let these say whether our bodies are very good now. And how about our spirits? I use the term SPIRIT here in the sense of its being the basis of human perception and thought. Are our spirits or minds very good? Let those who are trying to learn and look into the secrets of knowledge and science answer this. From the child in school to the highest rank in scholarship ever held by any man, the same complaint comes up, that lessons are hard, and what is acquired as knowledge is very unsatisfactory.

But I have touched only the hem of sin's garment in what I have said. If the soul or will of man were still very good, I mean to say here that if man had not lost his love for his fellowman and his love for God; in other words, if man still loved the Lord his God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself, feebleness of body and weakness of mind would be matters of small moment. The body is soon done with any way; and the mind or intellect is still sufficiently clear for all the purposes of life in this world; and when once disengaged from the body that here clogs and fetters it,—as it will be at death,—in the hope of being lifted to a higher sphere of perception and thought, the loss to man suffered by the fall in these two departments of his being would be comparatively small.

But man's will or inmost love is the secret spring of life. From this all his affections flow; and right here we find his Marah, the bitter waters of his soul. In reading the story of the children of Israel in the wilderness we learn that they came to a place where the waters were all bitter. Brethren, that place is right in our own hearts. Our hearts are the springs from which these bitter waters flow in the form of "evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." Mark 7:21,22. What an outflow of bitterness! Enough to flood a world to destruction! And this destruction had come, and its great Prophet, the Moses of love, come and cast a tree into the waters whereby they were made sweet. The Lord in his Word is this tree. He is the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. His voice comes to us from far: "I am the Lord that healeth thee; for the Son of man came to save that which was lost."

It is of infinite importance for us to know how he saves us, what we are expected to do, how we are to work with him and to what extent. I will try to give some light on this from the Word itself. Jesus said to his disciples: "If any man walk in the day, he

stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." This beautiful and striking parable, showing the benefit of knowledge and the disadvantage of ignorance, lights the sinner's way for his first step toward the Lord. Knowledge, which is light from the Lord through his Word, is the very first thing every one must receive. The sinner first receives the clay and the spittle applied to his blind eyes. He does not get his sight from the application. When he hears the Gospel with something of a desire to have his eyes opened he is receiving this anointing of his eyes. He must go to the pool of Siloam and wash before he can have sight. This washing in the pool is the first step in that humble spirit of obedience by which the understanding is cleared up and prepared to know the Lord. When any sinner gets this far the Lord is sure to find him and whisper in his heart: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Every true, penitent sinner, with his eyes open, will answer in heart: "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" Then the joyful response will be whispered again: "Thou has both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." The Lord meets the returning sinner in his blessed Word, and there he shows himself to him, and there he talks with him.

Water, in many places in the Old as well as the New Testament, is the emblem or symbol of Divine Truth. I need not say that without water man cannot live. His body is largely composed of water. It is consequently essential as a beverage; and an ablution, indispensable to cleanliness. Reading and hearing the Word of Divine Truth from a real thirst or desire to know the truth, is what is spiritually symbolized by drinking water. This may be proved by what the Lord said to the Samaritan woman "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; for it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." By the expression, "never thirst," Jesus does not mean that there will never be any further inclina-

tion to drink the water of life, but he means that there will in that soul never be any more perishing, dying thirst, for the water of life will be like a spring in the heart that will flow on forever from the Lord. It will be the rock in the wilderness that supplied the camp of Israel with water, and that Rock is Christ.

But again. The sinner's whole inner man is defiled with sin. This may be illustrated by the spots and scales and raw blotches on the skin, caused by the disease called leprosy. This disease affected every part of the body; but, like smallpox and some other kindred affections, it made itself mostly visible upon the surface of the body. It gave the victim a horrible appearance, so much so that no one was willing but such as were similarly afflicted, to go near a leper. But the water of Divine Truth will effectually and forever wash away all this filth and loathsomeness from the redeemed sinner's soul and prepare his spiritual body for that bright array of fine linen, clean and white, in which the saints shall be clothed as a fit emblem of their righteousness. Paul calls all this the washing of regeneration. In that great change, without which no man can see the kingdom of heaven, called regeneration, or the new birth, wrought by God only, the water of truth is the means employed. This is so evident that water is specifically named in connection with it in these words: "Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

Ananias did not forget this when instructing the penitent Saul of Tarsus; for at the close of all the words the Lord had authorized him to say to Saul, we find these: "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord. And Saul arose and was baptized." Saul's sins were not washed away by the water in which his body was baptized, but that water symbolized the truth, the Lord's truth, that does wash away sins. And his being immersed in it in each of the three names, according to the great commission which the Lord had given some time before, signified his faith in the Word of

the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Peter says: "Baptism is not the washing away of the filth of the flesh," but I feel authorized to say that it is the outward sign or emblem of the power of divine truth to wash away the filth of the soul. The change in Saul, wrought by this act as the crown of obedience, was so great that from this time on he was a new man, and had a new name, for he was called Paul ever after.

But we must not forget that salvation is all of God. Of ourselves we can do nothing. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. All that man can do is to take the Lord's hand and be led in the way; to open his eyes to the light, and his ears to the truth, and his heart to the life, in faith receiving, and in life living the precepts that make him wise unto salvation.

—Life and Labors of Elder John Kline.

DID JESUS DIE A SPIRITUAL DEATH ON THE CROSS?

One of the weaknesses of some Bible teachers is to rationalize on the Scriptures and consequently to arrive at conclusions that are neither reasonable, rational, nor Scriptural. Others innocently follow lines of thought or systems of interpretation which are far aside from truth. A great deal of error could be avoided if we were but content to accept the simple statements of the Bible as they are.

A brother told me that when he was beginning his ministry as a young man, he innocently used on an occasion some of the terms and phraseology commonly used by those who believe in a false eternal security. An elderly minister who was present directed a few pointed questions to the young man while he was on the floor. In defense of his statements he asked, "Doesn't the Bible say it that way?" The wise older minister replied, "Then YOU should say it that way."

Some well-meaning and zealous speakers and writer unwittingly borrow unscriptural statements and ideas

from unsound sources regarding the atonement. The following will suffice for examples: "He who had said, 'I am the WAY, I am the TRUTH, I am the LIFE, I am the DOOR, I am the GOOD SHEPHERD, I am the LIGHT,' now had to say (while on the cross), 'I am SIN.'" "It was here that the God-head experienced . . . a break in the eternal unity of the Trinity." God had to turn away His face from Christ on the cross because He could not look upon sin." "Tasting death meant a separation from God." "The impression that sin made on the soul of Jesus was one of broken fellowship." None of these are statements of Scripture, and it is doubtful if any of them can be supported by Scripture.

"Separation from God," "broken fellowship," or "sin on His soul" would mean spiritual death. The question has been well asked in the connection, "If our sins were so put on Him as to bring about spiritual death and separation from God, by what means was He restored to God's favor?" The consequences of our own sin, but for the substitutionary work of Christ, would have been eternal separation from God. Doubtless it will always remain a mystery to us as to just how "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." However, the whole emphasis upon the work of our Lord in atonement is upon the fact that He was an innocent sufferer. This is agreeable to the antitype found in the lamb of the Jewish sacrifices. The lamb could by no stretch of the imagination become guilty. In the same way the guiltless Lamb of God provided a basis for the forgiveness of our sin.

There are two passages of Scripture which, wrongly interpreted, are confusing to many people in the connection. One of these is II Cor. 5:21: FOR HE HATH MADE HIM TO BE SIN FOR US WHO KNEW NO SIN. Adam Clarke states unequivocally and explains convincingly that the basic meaning here is SIN OFFERING. This clears up any difficulty as to the penalty theory from this passage, and shows its harmony with the whole tenor of Scripture.

The other passage is the record of the cry of Jesus on the cross: MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME? The crucial point here is the sense in which we

understand that He was forsaken. If we say that God looked upon Him as a sinner, and that the wrath of God was upon Him, we hold to an interpretation which is incompatible with such passages as "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" "In him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; and "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

During Jesus' life on earth many attempts were made to harm or kill Him, but God always protected Him. If we understand "forsaken" to mean that God withdrew His protection and permitted Him to fall into the hands of wicked men to be abused, insulted, falsely accused, tortured, and left to die, suffering the more acutely because His sensibilities had not been blunted or "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin," we have an explanation that harmonizes with all the other simple statements of the Bible concerning Him. The Bible says that He was despised, rejected, stricken, smitten, afflicted, wounded, bruised, chastised, oppressed, and cut off out of the land of the living. He was put to grief, His woul was in travail, and He poured out His soul (life) unto death. These are descriptive phrases from the prophecy of Isaiah relating to the sacrificial work of Christ. Jesus fulfilled all of them on the cross and God accepted this offering as a satisfaction of the divine justice. Thus was provided a basis upon which the penitent soul can plead the forgiveness of sins.

"Christ's perfections were essential to give redeeming quality to His blood. His perfections were never taken from Him and given to anyone else. He was the perfect one in life, and in death, and now in heaven.

"He took our sins in the sense of assuming the settlement for them. Our sins were not imputed to Him, they never touched His soul and consequently He never paid the penalty for them, which was eternal death, and never drew the wrath of God upon Him.

"Eternal perdition of the guilty pays the penalty. No repentance or forgiveness belongs to this plan.

"The blood of the innocent Son of God MADE ATONEMENT and purchased repentance, forgiveness, and all of grace.

"The Savior never touched the penalty plan, but perfected the saints through atonement."

"His blood was shed for our sins and nothing more was necessary.

"In the emblems of the communion we have the elements involved in our redemption, the bread to represent His broken body and the cup to represent His precious blood, and that is all, and it is enough.

"There is no black cup to indicate that His soul was blackened by our imputed sin and fell under the wrath of God.

"He bore our sins (the settlement for them) IN HIS OWN BODY ON THE TREE; NOT ON HIS SOUL IN PERDITION. (I Peter 2:24).

"We have redemption through His blood (Eph. 1:7).

"We have peace through His blood (Col. 1:20).

"We are justified by His blood (Rom. 5:9).

"Cleansed from our sin by the blood (I John 1:7).

"We are sanctified by the blood (Heb. 13:12).

"Our robes are washed in the blood (Rev. 7:14).

"We have victory through the blood (Rev. 12:11).

"We enter heaven by the blood (Rev. 5:9).

—Adapted from an article in The Sword and Trumpet.

THE THRONE OF DAVID (Continued from page 145)

but for a limited time until Christ, the true son, (whose right it is) was born. And the tabernacle of David is again being built, and the ruins thereof is set up.

Thus when Jesus appeared to those unfaithful husbands or rulers of Israel, during his earthly ministry, and they rejected him and were ready to cast him out of the vineyard, he said to them, "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

This did not exclude those who were faithful, for to the faithful remnant, who were also Israelites, he said, "Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." —D.F.W.

OBITUARY

ELEANOR ELIZABETH (Miller) SKILES was born in Jasper County, Indiana. The daughter of Isaac M. and Ada Rebecca (Florence) Miller on May 5, 1884.

She was united in marriage to John S. Skiles who preceeded her in death in 1933, and also a daughter, Pansy L. Beam, in 1960.

She was stricken by a cerebral hemorrhage on Oct. 29, in the home of Mrs. Ed. Sechrist with whom she resided the past year, and passed away there.

She leaves to mourn one son, Loren J. Skiles; three sisters: Mrs. Bertha Snow, Princeton, Minn.; Mrs. Ethel Alcock, Boise, Idaho; Mrs. Menerva Beery, Cerro Gordo, Ill.; One brother, William A. Miller, Syracuse, Ind. Eight step children; nine grandchildren and a host of other relatives and friends.

Eleanor accepted Christ as her Savior early in life and was faithful to him and her church until she was called home on November 2, 1962 at the age of 78 years, 5 months, and 27 days.

Funeral services were conducted Nov. 5 at 1:15 P.M. at the North Union Church south of Wakarusa by the Brethren. Burial in the adjoining cemetery.

A. D. Skiles

SAFE PROGRESS

While it is true that we expect to emphasize the forward look we cannot forget the landmarks of the past which help us in our perspective. Theodore Roosevelt said that the only safely progressive man is the one who can look far into the past. It may seem like a paradox that in looking forward we must also look to the past but such is not the case. To chart a course for the future one must determine where he now is and how he has come to that position.

Selected

Historical

CHRISTMAS:

The supposed anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ, occurring on Dec. 25. No sufficient data, however, exist, for the determination of the month or the day of the event. Efforts to reach a fixed date for Zacharias's ministration and to combine this with the "sixth month" mentioned in connection with the annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:26) have given no assured result. Hippolytus seems to have been the first to fix upon Dec. 25. He had reached the conviction that Jesus's life from conception to crucifixion was precisely thirty-three years and that both events occurred on Mar. 25. By calculating nine months from the annunciation or conception he arrived at Dec. 25 as the day of Christ's birth. The uncertainty of all the data discredits the computation. There is no historical evidence that our Lord's birthday was celebrated during the apostolic or early postapostolic times. The uncertainty that existed at the beginning of the third century in the minds of Hippolytus and others—Hippolytus earlier favored Jan. 2, Clement of Alexandria "the 25th day of Pachon" (May 20), while others, according to Clement fixed upon Apr. 18 or 19 and Mar. 28—proves that no Christmas festival had been established much before the middle of the century. Jan. 6 was earlier fixed upon as the date of the baptism or spiritual birth of Christ, and the feast of Epiphany which was celebrated by the Basilidian Gnostics in the second century, and by catholic Christians by about the beginning of the fourth century.

The earliest record of the recognition of Dec. 25 as a church festival is in the Philocalian Calendar. In the East the celebration of Jan. 6 as the physical as well as the spiritual birthday of the Lord prevailed generally as early as the first half of the fourth cen-

tury. Chrysostom (in 386) states that the celebration of the birth of Christ "according to the flesh" was not inaugurated at Antioch until ten years before that date. He intimates that this festival, approved by himself, was opposed by many. An Armenian writer of the eleventh century states that the Christmas festival, invented in Rome by a heretic, Artemon, was first celebrated in Constantinople in 373. In Egypt the Western birthday festival was opposed during the early years of the fifth century, but was celebrated in Alexandria as early as 432. The Jerusalem church was celebrating birth and baptism on the same day (Jan. 6) about the middle of the fourth century, the former at Bethlehem, the latter at the Jordan, although the twenty-mile journey between involved great inconveniences (supposed letter of Bishop Cyril of Jerusalem to Bishop Julius of Rome, preserved in Combefis, HISTORIA HAERESIS MONOTHELITARUM). The Jerusalem bishop asks the Roman bishop to ascertain the real date of Christ's birth in order that, if possible, the practical difficulty may be overcome. Julius is represented as sending to Cyril a calculation in favor of Dec. 25, based upon the supposition (derived from Josephus) that Zacharias's vision took place at the Feast of Tabernacles. The Jerusalem church, however, persisted till 549 or later in celebrating birth and baptism on Jan. 6. The Christmas festival has never been adopted by the Armenians, the physical and spiritual birthdays being still celebrated conjointly on Jan. 6.

The wide-spread conviction during the early centuries that the baptism of Jesus was the occasion of his spiritual birth, or his adoption as Son of God and his exaltation to divine rank and power, tended to magnify the anniversary of his baptism and to cause comparative indifference as regards the precise date of his birth according to the flesh. In two Latin homilies, ascribed by some to Ambrose of Milan (4th cent.) and by others to Maximus of Turin (5th cent.), Jan. 6 is declared to be the birthday of the Lord Jesus, "whether he was born of the Virgin on that day or was born again in baptism." It is his "natal feast," his "nativity both

of flesh and of spirit." As thirty years before he "was given forth through the Virgin," so on the same day he was "regenerated" and "sanctified" "through the mystery." The writer, or an interpolator, virtually contradicts the statement about Christ's regeneration by explaining that "Christ is baptized, not in order that he may be sanctified by the waters, but that he may himself sanctify the waters."

The naive adoptionism that was so widely prevalent till the end of the second century in Syria, Asia Minor, Italy, northern Africa, and elsewhere, and for centuries later in Armenia, Spain, etc., was gradually displaced by the formulation and general acceptance of a christology (based upon the prologue of John's Gospel and the Epistles of Paul) which laid stress upon the preexistence of Christ as the eternal divine Logos and of the absolute deity of Jesus Christ from the time of his conception. The physical birth assumed more and more importance in the Christian consciousness. The celebration of Christmas as a special Christian festival spread rapidly from the middle of the fourth century onward in sympathy with the triumph of the orthodox christology.

How much the calculation of Hippolytus had to do with the fixing of the festival on Dec. 25, and how much the date of the festival depended upon the pagan Brumalia (Dec. 25), following the Saturnalia (Dec. 17-24) and celebrating the shortest day in the year and the "new sun" or the beginning of the lengthening of days, can not be accurately determined. The pagan Saturnalia and Brumalia were too deeply entrenched in popular custom to be set aside by Christian influence. The recognition of Sunday (the day of Phoebus and Mithras as well as the Lord's Day) by the emperor Constantine as a legal holiday, along with the influence of Manicheism, which identified the Son of God with the physical sun, may have led Christians of the fourth century to feel the appropriateness of making the birthday of the Son of God coincide with that of the physical sun. The pagan festival with its riot and merry-making was so

popular that Christians were glad of an excuse to continue its celebration with little change in spirit or in manner. Christian preachers of the West and the Nearer East protested against the unseemly frivolity with which Christ's birthday was celebrated, while Christians of Mesopotamia accused their Western brethren of idolatry and sun-worship for adopting as Christian this pagan festival. Yet the festival rapidly gained acceptance and became at last so firmly established that even the Protestant revolution of the sixteenth century was not able to dislodge it and Evangelical Christians even of the more radical types, who reject or ignore nearly all of the ecclesiastical festivals, have never been able wholly to ignore it.

The religious significance of Christmas has been too commonly minimized among Christians, the day among adults being degraded into one merely for the exchange of presents, often neither given nor received in any affection, but out of a sense of obligation or as barter. In too many homes the children, whose day it more particularly is, are not taught to link their merrymaking on Christmas with the gift of God to the world in the person of his Son Jesus Christ. Although some of our denominations hold service on that day, the vast majority of Protestants do not attend, and most of our denominations keep their churches closed. But as it is unquestioned that the Christian Church was founded by Jesus Christ, it will be well to celebrate the event of his birth, if not on Christmas day, then on some other day. The old gospel story of the Nativity has inspired many beautiful hymns and been the suggestion of many legends and elaborate festivities. By design, on Christmas day many important events have taken place, as the crowning of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor (800), and William as king of England (1066). —Schaff Herzog Religious Encyclopedia, 1905

"The true Israel then was the elect remnant within the nation."—Quote

O little town of Bethlehem!
How still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us to-day.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

—Phillips Brooks, 1868.

CHARACTERS OF THE BIBLE

URIAH THE HITTITE

Although the Bible has not much to say about this man yet enough is written to reveal that he must have been a man of very exceptional attainment.

When the Israelites entered the promised land they were met by seven nations greater and mightier than themselves. One of these was the idolatrous Hittites and without mercy. Thus a Hittite was by birth an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. Is it not strange then to find Uriah the Hittite among the thirty highest ranking men in the army of Gods' chosen people?

According to scholars the name Uriah means "light of Jehovah." This, together with Uriahs' own testimony as recorded in II Samuel 11:11, would give us to understand that he was a convert to the faith of the Israelites. This same reference is also an outstanding example of self-denial or, as Paul might say, of bringing the body into subjection. The Israelite army was at war with a foreign aggressor. Uriah was recalled from the front and offered the privilege of a furlough in his own home by King David himself. Who would not welcome such an opportunity after the privations and hardships of army life? Yet Uriah, out of reverence for the Ark of God and from a sense of duty and responsibility for the cause which was Gods' cause, refused to accept the offer. Where would one find a similar example of faith and devotion in our time?

Uriahs' name has a place along with the natural ancestors of Jesus Christ in Matthews account and surely he will also be one of the heirs of the righteousness which is by faith and will have a part in the resurrection of the just.

—Harold Royer
Elkhart, Indiana